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**GEO. C. SHATTUCK.**

**INSIDE OUT;**

OR,

***AN INTERIOR VIEW***

OF THE

**NEW-YORK STATE PRISON;**

TOGETHER WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF  
THE LIVES OF SEVERAL OF THE CONVICTS.

---

Here dissipation, vice and folly stare;  
Here the base heart is fearlessly laid bare;  
Here the weak head is open'd to your sight;  
Here ignorance, falsehood, misery and spite  
Stalk in your view.—

*Rickman.*

---

**BY ONE WHO KNOWS.**

---

**NEW-YORK.**

**PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,**

AND SOLD BY

**JAMES COSTIGAN,**

*94 Water-street.*

.....

**1823.**

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Southern District of New-York, ss.

BE it remembered, that on the twenty-sixth day  
Seal of the United States of America, James Costig  
of the said District, hath deposited in this Office the t  
of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in  
words following, to wit: "*Inside Out, or an interior view  
the New-York State Prison; together with biographical sket  
of the lives of several of the convicts.*"

*Here dissipation, vice, and folly stare;  
Here the base heart is fearlessly laid bare;  
Here the weak head is open to your sight;  
Here ignorance, falsehood, misery and spite  
Stalk in your view.—*

RICKMAN.

*By One who knows.*

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## PREFACE.

In compiling the following pages, it becomes me to state that I have not been actuated by a nonsensical rage for literary fame. *Public utility* has been essentially my aim; and if my attempt is not completely unsuccessful, the patronage of the public will follow my endeavours, and the interests of my family will be particularly subserved.

These are not the last declarations of a dying *thief*, nor of a penitent *murderer*; nor are they the speculations of an ambitious politician. The glance of curiosity is directed to the subject, with a hope that it may be productive of benefit to the community. Should these sheets fall into the hands of one who has the least idea of committing crime—whose mind is vacillating between the endurance of a virtuous penury and the tempting embraces of a wicked life, let the horrors which I have described, weigh heavily upon his soul—let him pause ere he leaves the chrystal threshold of virtue, for the desert region of soul torturing vice. Let him turn his eyes to his home, to his family, to his friends: see the

smile of complacency illuming every cheek, and every bosom reverberating the echo of his welcome. Let him see his company courted—admiration playing around the aspect of his companions, and mirth and sociality created by his presence—the imputation of calumny flying at his approach, and inhumanity blushing and shrinking into nothingness. O! let him gaze intently upon the picture, and mark the living lineaments of virtue. Few, how few, know the value of character, until they have irremediably, irrecoverably lost it. Realizing the consequences of the embracing of wickedness, let him view himself degraded, insulted and despised—horror gathering around him, and inhumanity railing at his name—parental and fraternal love, chilled into icy apathy—friendship casting towards him her alienated look—and conscience upbraiding him with undeniable wickedness; the circle of his former joys wholly silent, if not entirely deserted at his approach, and the brow of quondam pleasure, puckered into a frown. Let the sorry contrast thrill every fibre of his soul. Let him fly to the citadel of virtue, and perish in penury, but live to honor—pure, spotless and undying honor!

I know that I have to combat with *prejudice*, that inseparable companion of brutality and ignorance. I know that myriads of detractors and calumniators, besides the angry pack of State Prison beagles, and their equally rapacious mongrel curs in attendance,

will swarm and howl around me ; some influenced by malevolence, others maddened by *shaken* interest, and many actuated by the most pitiable revenge. I know that inhumanity with its aspect of heaven, and its heart of hell, will shout around my path, and discountenance my efforts, however radiant in purity or exalted in truth. With many readers, the acknowledged fact of my having written from experience, will serve as a tacit and unlimited license to the discovering of faults, of imperfections and of errors, which in any other writer would pass wholly unnoticed. Some, startled at the mere name of the author, without opening the work, in the littleness of their hearts, will superciliously condemn it. Others, rising from its cursory perusal, and arrogating to themselves the exclusive right of determining and appreciating its merit, will deem its suggestions as unpardonably presumptuous. But the genuine philanthropist, trampling upon prejudice, and despising illiberality, will estimate aright its value and its worth. Remembering that the immortal Shakespeare wrote under the *attested* imputation of theft, and that even our own illustrious Franklin, during his entire life, lamented a youthful imprudence, which at the present day would be *tortured* into a larceny, he will not advert to the mere misfortune of the author, in order to prove the impossibility of his usefulness. By the philanthropist only do I expect to be countenanced, and for him alone, on this occasion have I written.



# INTRODUCTION.

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———— I shall tell you  
A pretty tale—  
Shakespeare.

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It is unnecessary to inform the reader of the various expedients that have been resorted to from the earliest ages of the world, to prevent the perpetration of crime. It would be travelling through modes of punishment—through executions and exilements, brandings and croppings, whippings and rackings—disgusting to humanity and profitless to the reader. For all the purposes of this work, it is merely necessary to state, that until the year 1795, capital crimes were punishable and punished with death, *by hanging*, in the state of New-York, as well as in most of the other states of the Union. In the year 1790, an ameliorated system was begun to be tried in the state of Pennsylvania, substituting imprisonment *and labour*, for death. It was an experiment, and the board of Inspectors of the prison, for the city and county of Philadelphia, in an official report, shortly afterwards made, congratulated their

fellow citizens on its happy result, and entirely approved of the new mode of punishment. In 1794, the punishment of death was abolished by the legislature of Pennsylvania, for every crime but that of premeditated murder. The philanthropic descendants of William Penn congratulated themselves upon the glorious result of their labours, and the eye of humanity was immoveably fixed upon the ameliorated system. The maxim of Beccaria seemed fully to be verified: "It is not the *intensity* of punishment, but its *duration*, which makes the greatest impression upon the human mind." The state of New-York, encouraged by the example of Pennsylvania, instituted a similar prison, but on a much more contracted scale. Its criminal code was revised and ameliorated in 1795; imprisonment and hard labour succeeding capital punishments. How its purposes have been answered, may explicitly be gathered from the perusal of the succeeding pages. I have there given the reader a succinct history of the prison, with its abuses and defects, from actual experience and minute observation. And although it may be deemed

"a passing shame,  
That I, unworthy body as I am,  
Should censure thus,"

yet I have attempted to show the impossibility of promoting the interests of virtue, and of serving the cause of humanity, by the continuing or pursuing of

a system of punishment, that merely generates crime. I array not myself against the learned men, who have written upon the subject of imprisonment and labour. I would merely be allowed to stand beneath the shade of humanity, and urge an humble opinion, the result of melancholy experience. I reverence the names of Bentham, of Pastoret, of Colquhoun, of Burgh, and of Beccaria as much as any man breathing. Their suggestions are fraught with learning, with wisdom, and with genuine philanthropy. Their conclusions were drawn from the storehouse of philosophy—I have gathered mine in the wretchedness of experience. They wrote in favour of imprisonment *and* hard labour—I condemn as impolitic *hard labour* with imprisonment. Or rather, I condemn hard labour wherever it gives an opportunity to convicts of conversing unrestrainedly, and thus corrupting each other, as they do in this prison. If it were possible to erect a prison with solitary dormitories and separate workshops for the convicts, and to obtain virtuous and moral men to act as Keepers, imprisonment *and* hard labour might in some degree, answer the views of its advocates. But even then it would be impracticable to pursue a variety of useful mechanical employments; the want of proper workmen to instruct the convicts would equally be felt; and that *reflection* so necessary to the work of reformation in the mind of the convict, would entirely be lost in the din and hum of

business. Then convicts would find too many *outward* objects to divert their minds, to feel any *inward* woe on account of their crimes.

This work has been divided, and classed under several specific heads—viz. BUILDING, OFFICERS, CONVICTS, INTERNAL PUNISHMENTS, CRIMES, SENTENCES, LABOUR, DIET, HOSPITAL, PARDONS, and PRISON ACCOUNTS. A general exhibit is given of the *moral* and *financial* state of the prison, which may be esteemed worthy of the reader's attention. No feelings have been respected at the expence of justice; "nothing extenuated, nor ought set down in malice." Throughout the whole work, I have frankly described my own feelings, and in many instances the feelings and opinions of others. It may be esteemed the design of the succeeding sheets principally to show,

1st. That the prison has failed to promote the object of its institution.

2d. That the officers, in general, are *immoral*, and set a bad example to the convicts.

3d. That the convicts by intermixing corrupt each other.

4th. That Sentences, under the present system, are ineffectual to the prevention of crime.

5th. That the labour of the prison is generative of depravity.

6th. That the convicts are often treated with the utmost inhumanity.

7th. That the pardoning clemency is wholly abused.

8th. That there is a want of integrity in the making out of the prison accounts.

I have also pointed out some minor abuses and defects, which it is wholly unnecessary to apprize the reader of in a brief introduction. The remedy which I have humbly suggested for all the particularized evils, is imprisonment *without* labour, in *solitude*, however greatly it may be opposed by the learned Inspectors, and other sagacious men.

In the appendix subjoined, will be found the report of the Inspectors, which has been particularly adverted to, upon several occasions, in the course of this work ; and also biographical sketches of the lives of several of the convicts.

If the public should be pleased to receive this volume favourably, it will be followed by another on the same subject, containing equally interesting matter ; and the author, at least, humbly hopes that this volume may be the means of turning the attention of the Governor, and the Legislature of our state towards an immediate inquiry into State Prison management.



## BUILDING.

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I think the Gods are Antonies, and give  
Like prodigals, this nether world away  
To none but *wasteful* hands—  
Dryden.

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“It is an extensive structure of the Doric order, situated at Greenwich, about a mile and a half from the City-Hall, and occupying one of the most healthy and pleasant spots on the banks of the Hudson. It is constructed of free stone, the windows being grated with iron for security. It is two stories high of 15 feet each, besides the basement, and has a slated roof.—Rising from the centre there is a neat cupola, in which a bell is hung. The centre of the principal front, towards Washington-street, is projected and surmounted by a pediment as is also the west front. The whole front measures 204 feet in length, and there are four wings which extend backwards towards the river. The buildings and yards cover four acres of ground, and the whole is enclosed by a stone wall of 23 feet high on the side of the river, and 14 feet in the front.

“There are 52 rooms for prisoners 12 feet by 18, each of them large enough to accommodate 3 persons. The centre of the building is appropriated

to the use of the Inspectors, Agents, Keeper, and Assistants. In the north wing is a chapel fitted up with galleries. In the south wing is the dining hall, over which is a large apartment, allotted to prisoners who work at shoemaking. On the second floor of the north west wing, there is an hospital, and on the ground floors, of the first south and north wings, there are two kitchens for the use of the prisoners.

“Adjoining the end of each wing, there is a building of stone, two stories high, containing 7 cells on the upper floor for solitary confinement. They measure 8 feet long, 6 wide, and 14 high, and the windows are 8 feet from the floor.

“In the yards are the different workshops of the prisoners. These are constructed of brick; and are spacious and airy. Here all the prisoners, (except shoemakers, the sick, the females, who are kept by themselves, and a few men who are selected as assistants;) are employed during the day at their different occupations. The whole prison is abundantly supplied with water. Attached also to the building, there is a saw pit, a cellar, an ice house, a smoke house, a fire engine house, pumps, and a number of convenient places for storing fuel, and for other essential purposes.

“No convict whose sentence is below three years imprisonment, is admitted into this prison. On entrance, a prisoner is immediately stripped, washed and cleaned, and then dressed in a new shirt, trow-

sers, shoes and stockings. After a description of his person &c. is entered on the prison book, he is immediately put to work, and kept at hard labour, agreeably to his sentence. In summer, the rooms are unlocked at 6 o'clock in the morning; in winter at day-light, when the prisoners are called to work, at which they continue till 6 o'clock in the evening, allowing sufficient time for their meals, which are three every day. On the beat of a drum, at 9 o'clock in summer, and 8 o'clock in winter, they retire to bed.

"The original cost of the ground, buildings, and wharf, was estimated at 208,846 dollars.

"The following are the crimes punishable by imprisonment in the State Prison.

*"Imprisonment for Life.* Rape; robbery; burglary; sodomy; maiming; breaking into and stealing from a dwelling house, some person therein being put in fear; forging the proof of a deed, or the certificate of its being recorded; forging public securities; counterfeiting gold or silver coins. A *second* offence in committing arson of an uninhabited house, building, barn or mill, or in forging a record, deed, will, bond, note, bill, receipt, warrant or order, and all offences above the degree of petit larceny, not otherwise provided for.

*"For Life, or some shorter period in the discretion of the Court.* Forging any record, charter, deed, will, note or bill of exchange.

*"For Life, or some shorter period not less than seven years.* Selling or exchanging a counterfeit note; engraving any plate for making such notes; or having such notes in possession with intent &c or blank unfinished notes to fill up and pass: or plates for forging such notes.

*"Not exceeding 14 years.* Stealing a record &c; Arson of an uninhabited house, building, barn or mill; counterfeiting any deed or will, not affecting real estate, bond, bill or note, unless negotiable, warrant or order, not being a bill of exchange, endorsement or assignment thereof; or receipt; and every offence above petit larceny, not otherwise provided for. For forcibly marrying a woman against her will; Poisoning, where death does not ensue within a year and a day. A second assault with intent to rob, murder, or commit a rape. Acknowledging a fine, bail, &c. in the name of another.

*"Imprisonment not exceeding 10 years.* Aiding a prisoner to escape from the State Prison, or any other prison, convicted for felony, perjury, or subordination of perjury. False swearing under the insolvent act, under absent or absconding debtor act: Lottery managers swearing false. The like Surveyors under the land office, before a commissioner in chancery. In the Supreme Court.

*"Not exceeding 7 years.* Having in possession counterfeit gold, or silver coin, with intent &c. Assault with intent to rob, murder, or commit a rape. Serving process under foreign authority.

*"Not exceeding 5 years.* A second conviction, of buying or receiving stolen goods, or obtaining money by false pretences, or accessory after the fact, to any felony not otherwise provided for.

*"Not exceeding 3 years.* Petit larceny, buying or receiving stolen goods, obtaining money &c. by false pretences, or accessory after the fact to any felony not otherwise provided for.     *o*

"By an act of the legislature, passed April 15, 1817, it is enacted 'that in all cases of conviction for *larceny*, which may hereafter be had and made, the same shall be adjudged petit larceny, unless the goods so stolen shall be of the value of more than 25 dollars.'

*"For double the original term.* A convict for years breaking the State Prison.

"Treason, Murder and Arson of an inhabited dwelling house, were formerly the only offences punished with death in this state. By an act of the legislature, dated April 15th 1817, it is enacted "that if any prisoner confined in the State Prison, or any other person, shall wilfully and maliciously set fire to the said prison, or to any of the *workshops, or other erections* within the walls thereof, or *procure* the same to be done, or *aid or abet* the doing thereof; or shall be guilty of an assault or battery, with an intent to commit murder upon any officer of said prison, such person being thereof convicted, shall be adjudged guilty

of felony, and shall suffer *death*.—*Sec. 13.* By another section, convicts are authorized to be employed on the great canals. Respecting these, it is enacted “that in case any of the said convicts shall *escape* while so employed, as aforesaid, and shall be apprehended and convicted thereof, it shall and may be lawful for the court where such conviction may be had, to banish such convict or convicts from the state, on pain of *death*, if such convict or convicts shall *return* to this state, or *continue therein*, after such sentence as aforesaid.” *Sect. 12.*

By the instituting of a State Penitentiary, it was intended that the ends of public justice should be fully answered; that convicts should become *reformed*; that their *labour* should be equal to the entire *expences* of their keeping; and that habits of *industry*, should be engrafted upon them, beneficial to the community, and salutary to themselves. The inculcation of *virtuous* precepts, and the *practised* developement of moral truths, were esteemed by its advocates, as indispensable auxiliaries to the work of reformation. Every suggestion of philanthropy was cheerfully adopted. A chapel was fitted up in the prison for religious instruction, and a library of moral and religious books, was purchased, for the edification and improvement of the convicts. The society of *Friends*, peculiarly eminent for good works; the first ever in the field of humanity, and the last to abandon it; teaching virtue to others, by the pious

practice of it themselves ; were zealously employed in the advancement of the interests of the institution, and the morality of its incumbents. Economy presided over the immediate concerns of the prison ; the labour was not entirely unprofitable, and, for the first few years after its organization, its founders and advocates, were cheered with the prospect, of its answering their warmest and most sanguine expectations. But, there was an evil vegetating in the very desert of solitude, calculated to thwart all the purposes of benevolence, and defeat all the warmest designs of philanthropy. In a word, the convicts corrupted each other. They were constrained to silence during the time they were at work ; but intervals of leisure would unavoidably occur—their cunning was a match for the vigilance of their keepers—however closely they were watched, their intercourse was unrestrained—upon retiring from labour, they conversed freely in their rooms—and depravity was *generated*, by the very steps taken, in humanity, to prevent it. It was a radical defect, and was much to be lamented. Like a cancer in the natural body, it extended itself daily—a vice of the most alarming magnitude—baffling all the efforts which could be made to suppress it, or to retard its baleful progress. Whilst a glimmer of hope remained, of effecting the purposed reformation, its early advocates were indisposed to abandon the project. But an entire failure became at length too apparent.

The skilful hands that had guided the institution from its infancy, unsuccessful in their humane endeavours, retired from the charge; and prodigality and extravagance, immediately succeeded. New officers adopted new measures. Experiment, vainly made, led again to experiment. The convicts, instead of advancing in morality, by daily intercourse, became more eminently depraved. The Keepers were immoral in the very eyes of the convicts, and set a bad example for their immediate imitation. Crime pardoned, led to crime repeated—vice succeeded vice, and wickedness followed wickedness, until about the *one fifth* of the whole number of convicts became, and were, *returned* and hardened felons, upon second, third, fourth, fifth and sixth convictions. The expences had encreased to an unparalleled amount, and were yearly augmenting, when the Inspectors officially informed the Legislature, of the utter failure of the prison, to reach the objects of its institution.

In May 1819, I was, unfortunately, compelled to an acquaintance with the concerns of the prison. Although I had lived, all my life time, in the city of New-York, I had never, until then, entered the dreary prison gate. It was always to my mind a horrid place, and I naturally expected to find every visage sad, every eye sunk, every cheek pale, and every heart among the convicts, uncommonly depressed. The severity of punishment—the solitude of adversity—the bleakness of their prospects—the agony

of their destitution—the horrid result of their crimes—I assuredly thought, were fully calculated to produce such appearances. But I was entirely mistaken. There was nothing to be seen, but unbounded levity. Cheerfulness and contentment played upon their cheeks; quietude of mind was visible in their actions. Depraved in the most shocking degree, they evinced every thing unmanly, obscene and disgusting. Relinquishing all claim to a single principle of virtue, they dwelt upon vice with unlimited pleasure, and rebuked the least image of rectitude, that appeared. To escape the brutality of their wicked persecution, it was indispensably necessary for a *well meaning* man to associate with them, and become a vagabond equally desperate with themselves. I saw that reform, in their unheeded sequestration, was utterly impossible; and that it argued little less than *lunacy* to indulge such a hope. Vice grew in potency, its growth could not be checked. The energies of benevolence were entirely paralyzed. Imprisonment was divested altogether of its terrors. A Charybdis had been avoided for a Scylla of destruction. The convicts had been secluded from the fascinations of vice, to become desperately depraved, in the very shade of their solitude. If any thing was necessary to perfect them in their wickedness, it was readily furnished by the very example of their Keepers. Those who should have been actively employed, in promoting morality among them,

and filling their minds with those salutary precepts, so essential to their future rectitude, and their usefulness to the world, were *in general*, (in the very language of one of themselves, expressed in the letter under the head of OFFICERS,) "the worst men that society could produce; not possessed of common morality; drunkards, swearers, &c. &c." They were actually monitors of crime for the instruction of the convicts. I have heard them indulge themselves in the most obscene and wicked conversations, with vulgar, profligate and abandoned convicts, to the manifest corruption of many within their hearing. I have heard their profanity, their cursing and their swearing, and have wondered at its known toleration by the Inspectors. And I have not unfrequently, seen them staggering, from intoxication, about their shops, abusing every convict whom they casually met, and venting their vulgarity without blushing or reserve.

The *fiscal* concerns of the prison, under its different administrations, (if the reports upon the subject, are entitled to the least credit,) have had frequent alternations of successes and reverses; one year at the zenith of prosperity, the next at the very nadir of adversity—according to the management and skillfulness of its officers. The present Inspectors, as will be seen by their report, subjoined in the appendix, *now* consider "the *concerns* of the prison to be fast approximating to that state of perfection, which

will crown the wishes of its advocates, and dispel the doubts of its opposers :” “ a consummation devoutly to be wished” for, by every virtuous, every humane, every sensible man. I apprehend, however, that the Inspectors allude more particularly to the *financial* concerns of the prison, than to the *moral* improvement of the convicts ; unless a miraculous and improbable change, has, very recently been effected in their hearts :—a change, that a supernatural power only, in so short a period, could possibly produce. It will be remembered, that that same flattering song was, very recently, chanted to the Legislature, during the administration and guardianship of another set of Inspectors ; and that its dulcet melody was succeeded by the dissonance of adversity. It is certainly to be hoped that the present pleasing *air*, may not meet, (as I am half inclined to predict) with the same lamentable fate. By recurring, however, to a subsequent part of this work, under the head of “Prison Accounts,” it will readily be seen, how such an event may be avoided—how such a deprecated evil, for the present may be averted.

It is, to many, a matter of surprise, that the convicts in this prison, huddled together as they are, can be kept in a state, comparatively, of *tranquil* security. And the uninformed are willing to attribute *that* security, to the extraordinary sagacity and vigilance of its officers.

In other prisons, of a similar construction in the States

attempts to break away and escape, are very frequently made, although they are, in general, but partially successful. The convicts of the Philadelphia prison, the mother of the Penitentiary establishment in America, have rushed, frequently, upon their officers; have broken the walls, and sawed off the gratings of the windows, in order to escape; and are continually in tumult. In New-Jersey, I believe the prison was once actually wrested from its officers, by a few desperate convicts, and its doors thrown open, for the escape of the rest. In Maryland and Virginia, the convicts have been, frequently, detected in their attempts, and many, I am credibly informed, have escaped. And in Connecticut, New-Hampshire and Massachusetts, it requires the greatest vigilance, to keep them in peace and security. One observation grows out of the review of the police, of these several prisons, with respect to the convicts; which may not, at this time, be unaptly noticed.—*The lesser the hope of executive favour, the greater is the effort, in desperation, to escape.* In this prison, *hope* keeps the heart of the convict alive. He expects to be liberated from his confinement, by mere *evenness* of deportment, however lengthy his sentence, in a short four or five years. Others receive the executive pardon, in his own estimation, much less deserving of it, than himself; the Keepers, occasionally, feed him, with a crumb of good nature, and perhaps hold out to him, at no despair-creating distance,

the winking taper of consummated hope. He sees an *attempt* to escape, if discovered, punished by a commencement anew of his sentence, and an extravagant and barbarous *local* punishment, inflicted upon him, destructive to his constitution, as well as agonizing to his feelings. And a re-capture, *if he should succeed in escaping*, punished by an almost certain imprisonment, in double the original term of his sentence. Every convict has his own views to promote, and his own interests to serve. Whatever measure destroys the chance of pardon in another, more entitled to it than himself, advances him one step nearer to his liberty, and renders his hope more perceptibly brilliant. HOPE, the beacon gleam of misery is ever in his eye; remove it for an instant, and you fit him for desperation. This is verified by the prison in Philadelphia. For the first few years after its institution, its tranquillity, was, undisturbed.—As a repetition of offence was observed by its guardians, the prospect of a pardon was rendered more remote, with the hope of deterring others from the commission of crime. The lenient principles, upon which it was established, and whose success, encouraged several of the other States of the Union, to adopt the same mode of punishment, gradually melted away, and a speedy pardon, which was once so certain, has now become an object of the greatest doubt. The hope of pardon removed, convicts were to obtain by *artifice*, by *fraud*, and by *force*,

what they cannot realize, by placidity and temperance. Remote punishments, create immediate hopes of escaping ; and inquietude, tumult, and disturbance, are, necessarily, the consequence. So must it be in every prison, where the convicts are congregated ; and so will it be in this prison, when the same reason exists. But there is another reason why convicts are kept, *securely*, in this prison. One convict is a spy upon another. There is no unity : every man acts for himself. The very convict who would (while the hope of pardon exists,) propose the breaking, and escaping from the prison, would not scruple to give information of it, secretly, to the Keeper, the very instant that the proposition should be acceded to, by his companions. The attempt would be discovered—every one concerned in it, would be exemplarily punished—and the *traitor*, though the ringleader, would be *rewarded* by a pardon. The convicts are apprised of this fact, and they do not, dare not rely upon each other. But, let their interests, their expectations, and their despairs be *united*, by destroying, for a moment, the prospect of a pardon, and my word for it, this prison will readily exhibit, a scene of anarchy, of confusion, and of bloodshed, equal to, if not surpassing, any of the other prisons that I have named. It is lamentable, that the Executive clemency *must* be exercised, to the injury of public justice, and the disregard of moral rectitude. It has been repeatedly done in this prison, to ensure

*tranquillity*, and to *reduce* the number of convicts, without a single eye to the *morality*, of those liberated. It is time that something, more political, were adopted. In the present way, to liberate the convicts acknowledged villians, is an actual and undeniable criminality ; and to *refuse* to liberate them, congregated as they are, will assuredly be destructive of that desirable tranquillity, which has so *nonsensically* been the boast, for a series of years, of the warmest advocates of the prison, and an indubitable evidence of the vigilance of its officers.

The religious exercises of the prison, for the last fifteen or sixteen years, have been under the direction of the Rev. JOHN STANFORD—a venerable and eminently pious man. He officiates, *personally*, on the first and *fifth* Sundays of the month, and furnishes the sacred desk, on the intermediate Sabbaths, with Clergymen, of different persuasions : on the second Sunday of the month, with Protestant Episcopal ; on the third Sunday, with Dutch Reformed, or Presbyterian, and on the fourth Sunday, alternately, with Methodist and Baptist. If the reading of a clerical lecture, were capable of estranging the mind of a *bad* man, from the odious pursuit of vice, long ago, had this prison been a scene of penitence, of reformation, and of virtue. The labours of philanthropy, had not been unavailing ; the exertions of piety, had not been despised ; and the angel of christianity, long ago, would have wept, with the kneeling

child of contrition, and the mingled tear would have laved, into grateful oblivion, every trace, every vestige, of its former iniquity. The charm of religion—the moist jewel of purity—the valued gem of Omnipotence—the *tear of contrition*, is the passport to Heaven. Under an oriental fiction, it has thus been described :

A pearly tear, gush'd from the heart's core, was trembling,  
 As pure as the dew-drop, in misery's eye,  
 A Peri\* beheld it—there was no dissembling—  
 'Twas vice's tear chasing adversity's sigh.  
 O! yes, 'twas a chrystal drop, waken'd by sorrow,  
 An emblem of truth—from the home where it slept ;  
 A jewel, to sparkle and gladden the morrow  
 When piety breath'd, and when misery wept.

Its channel was mark'd with the trace of its brother,  
 That recently roll'd from its chrystalline store ;  
 The Peri now saw it, the bed of another,  
 The last and the deepest, that ever it bore ;  
 She caught it, and flew to the portals of heav'n,  
 The cherub receiv'd it—the off'ring was meet—  
 The chrystal doors sever—the Peri's forgiv'n—  
 And *penitent* man, finds a home, at her feet.

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\* The *Peris*, by Eastern bards, are represented to be *female* angels, expelled from Elysium, and wandering about the world, under divine displeasure, in search of an offering, to propitiate the Gods.

—But, from men like those in the prison, no *contrition* can be expected. Among them, Christianity is a topic of uniform ridicule. The breath of piety, is utterly contemned, and the orisons of devotion, are blushlessly execrated.

No recourse can now be had, by the convicts, to the Library of the prison, for edification or improvement. The Inspectors, much more careful of the library tomes, than desirous of inculcating the precepts of morality, have prohibited the lending, of any book or books, to any convict, in the prison, however studious and well disposed. The avowed reason for this prohibition, is, the carelessness of the convicts. Some of them soil the books, others tear them, and most of them return them, “creas’d like dog’s ears:” all horrible crimes, in a would-be *reading* convict. To me, this was a barbarous prohibition; and I felt it, severely, for the first year of my imprisonment. The Library was purchased for the use of the convicts; and the soiling of a book, by a labouring man, for whose express reading it was intended, must have been expected by those, who suggested its expedience, and been deemed, by them, a matter of the most trifling moment. If there is a wilful destruction of a book, by a convict, the Inspectors have the power, and they will scarcely, be disposed, to forego the opportunity, of punishing him for it; and it is ungenerous and impolitic, nay, barbarously inhuman, to deprive one single *well meaning* man in the prison, of

the privilege of reading any book in that Library, because some wicked and ignorant, and bookless convict, has abused or soiled a volume, previously lent for his perusal.

A fund is created, by the charging of one shilling, to every visitor of the Prison Factories, out of which the Stationary, Books, &c. are purchased.

There is a Coachman, (who acts also as Cartman,) employed at the prison, at the moderate sum of 365 dollars per annum, whose duty it is merely to ride the Inspectors, Agent, &c., to and from the prison, and to transport the materials, raw and manufactured, of the contractors, according to their special direction. Without much violence to the imagination, it can readily be seen how this *lackey* may be dispensed with. There are always *three* lazy Keepers off duty, and unemployed, about the prison. Let the Contractors employ their own cartmen, and when it may be necessary, for the health or accommodation of the Inspectors, or of any other potent officer, of the prison, let one of these same three Keepers, when idling away his time, unprofitably, in the Keepers room, with his hands closely sheathed in the pockets of his pantaloons, be transformed into a Coachman, and the State will thus be saved, exactly, the sum of 365 dollars annually.

## OFFICERS.

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I pass'd this very moment by the doors,  
And found them guarded by a troop of villians.  
OTWAY.

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## INSPECTORS.

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THE immediate custody of the prison, is given, by law, to *seven* Inspectors, who are generally drawn from the ordinary walks of life, and receive no compensation for their services : Two hundred and fifty dollars per annum, being however allowed them, to defray the expenses of their eating, drinking, &c., when they meet at the prison. It is their province, to examine, minutely, into the immediate concerns of the prison—to appoint all its other officers—to hear all complaints of the convicts—and to overlook and investigate every thing connected with their charge. The morality, the peace, and the safety of society, is deeply involved in their duties. They are stationed, as sentinels, upon the watch-tower of

virtue, between the desperate and excluded offender, and a virtuous community ; and it would be highly criminal for them, to slumber on their post.—They are bound to acquire a perfect knowledge of the character, of every convict, committed to their custody ; for, by that knowledge alone, are they enabled rightly, to estimate, the sufficiency of his punishment, and the probability of his good conduct, and usefulness, in subsequent life. They are thus, essentially, responsible for the morality, of every convict, whom they may liberate from confinement, and restore to society. Whenever they shall find a reformation to have taken place, in the morals of any convict, it is their duty, to recommend him, immediately, to the Executive, for pardon ; for *then*, and not till *then*, are the very purposes and ends of the law, inflicting the punishment, entirely answered. Public justice, is defeated, by an indiscriminate pardon, of any and every convict, whose mere *length* of imprisonment, occasions him to be viewed, as a proper object, for the Executive clemency.

#### AGENT.

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The Inspectors appoint an Agent, in whose name all the business transactions of the prison are conducted ; and by which name, *as Agent*, he is capable, in law, of suing and being sued. On his endeavours, the prosperity of the financial concerns of the prison,

essentially depends. The Inspectors delegate their powers, almost wholly, to him, and they audit his transactions *twice* in every month. From the responsibility of his station, and the extent of his duties, it is evident, that he should neither be an ignorant coxcomb, nor a superannuated poetaster. Possessed of a strong and comprehensive mind, he should be able to fathom the depth of every thing, connected with his duties, and, instead of indulging in the reveries of an imagination, heated by brandy and tobacco, he should be, steadily, employed in advancing the interests of the institution. He should visit the workshops, in the prison, at least four times in every year, (which, by the bye, is oftener than ever I knew the present Agent to do it, during any one year of my confinement,) and be capable of observing the improvement of every convict, in the branch of business assigned him. He makes all contracts and agreements, for the labour of the convicts, for their diet, medicines, &c., under the direction of the Inspectors ; and he *should*, personally, make all purchases for the prison, of raw and other materials, and not be disposed, to confide the interests of the State, to the honesty of others. The Agent is directed by law, to close his annual accounts on the 31st of October, in every year, and to make out a fair exhibit of them for the Comptroller, accompanied by vouchers for monies paid, on account of the prison. To acquire the knowledge indispensable to a correct performance

of this duty, he should attend, personally, at stated times, to the regulating and arranging, of the prison books of account ; should become well acquainted with their exact standing ; and when the extracting, and analysing, of the various accounts, for the Comptroller takes place, he should, industriously, employ himself, in testing their accuracy. But he should, above all, be well acquainted with the *honest* mode of stating them, and be disposed strictly to *adhere to*, and to *practise* that knowledge. He receives a salary of 1500 dollars per annum.

#### CLERK.

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The Agent is allowed *one* Clerk to assist him in the discharge of his duties. He should have, at least, a school-boy knowledge of accounts, and of book-keeping ; and should feel active enough, in the performance of his duties, to examine the books, as kept by the convicts, selected to assist him, a few times, during the year, and before the closing, definitively, of the prison accounts. He should be capable of discovering any inaccuracy, at a single glance ; and not be obliged to exhaust a pound of Lorillard's Rappee, to arouse his faculties, to a knowledge and perception, of the most palpable error. The least trifle should not be capable of ruffling his mind, nor pozing him in the discharge of his official duties. Industry and perseverance, are expected from him, as a con-

sideration for his salary ; and it would, certainly, become him, to exercise them both. The Agent relies greatly, upon him, and he should be particularly cautious how he trusts, entirely, to convict-clerks, who have nothing, but the fear of a trifling *punishment*, to make them at all accurate. He has much to attend to ; but he can easily spare time, and it should be his *duty* to do so, to attend to the *Journalizing* and *Ledgerizing* of the prison accounts. He keeps the Cash and Sales books; and at the expiration of every month, he hands them over to the convict-clerks, to make up the prison postings. At such a time, it would be very easy, for the book-keeping convict, wilfully to omit the debiting or crediting of any item, of almost any amount ; for no trouble is ever taken, to examine the posting, when performed, nor to correct any such omission. At the end of the year, when the prison accounts are adjusted and made out, he should be actively employed, in and about the business ; and he should, generally, be willing to *earn*, as well as to *receive*, the six hundred dollars salary allowed him.

In selecting and appointing Keepers for the prison, some regard should be paid, by the Inspectors, to the morality of the applicants. An unimpeached moral character, should be deemed, by them, an indispensable requisite, to *every* officer appointed ; and it should be particularly so of every keeper, because the *moral improvement* of the convict, de-

pend, greatly, upon the moral character, and conduct of the Keeper, to whose charge he is committed. It is the very acme of imprudence, to give "*drunkards, swearers, &c.*" a place among men, who are to be taught, nay, *constrained* to respect them; and who will, more readily, become familiar with *new* vices, than strangers to *old* ones. The opinion of an Ex-Keeper, expressed in the following letter, may afford an instruction upon the subject. It is copied verbatim.

"Gentlemen.—As you are the only two of the "Legislature with whom I am acquainted, and with "whom I have conversed on the subject of the New-York State Prison, permit me according to our "agreement of communication, to state a few items "relative to said prison.—1st item—With regard to "the *Assistant Keepers*, and *others* holding situations "about the institution, who are *foreigners*. It undoubtedly, is the case, that the principal part of "them are foreigners, and I will venture to say the "*worst* men that society could produce. They are "*not possessed of common morality*; they are *drunkards, swearers, &c. &c.* and they not only *persecute* "the *well meaning* prisoners, but also the American "Keepers. Sirs, this is an abuse, which ought to be "rectified. These men ought not to be in office, to "the rejection of our own countrymen.

"2d item—In my opinion, there is no necessity of "a guard of 24 men. I have often wondered why

"our prison cannot be guarded the same as Boston  
 "and others. A few men, dressed in citizens clothes,  
 "mount guard there during the day, and I am sure  
 "the order of that prison is as good as any in the  
 "Union. I therefore assert again that there is no  
 "need of a guard of 24 men. It is only an expence  
 "to the state. The prisoners cannot get away, and  
 "if they were so disposed, they cannot prevent  
 "them. Besides the prisoners cannot set fire to  
 "stone. But above all, I cannot for the soul of me  
 "see what necessity there is for a Captain to said  
 "guard. Look gentlemen at the enormous expen-  
 "ces which are annually paid for his support; a free  
 "house, fuel, &c. &c. to walk about during the year  
 "and do nothing.

"But to sum the matter up with regard to the  
 "guard, in my opinion, and it is the opinion of  
 "others, that *nine* moral men would be sufficient to  
 "guard the prison, if it was not half so strong.  
 "This would save expences annually, and be doing  
 "justice to the community at large.

"Since our last interview I have been arrested by  
 "the Principal, and *threatened with a dismissal by*  
 "*the Inspectors, if I should expose errors.*"

Although there is a ridiculous *nationality*, running  
 through the first item of this epistle, characteristic  
 at once of littleness and imbecility, and unimportant  
 to any reasonable and thinking man, yet there is an  
 evidence afforded by it, strong, liquid, and irrefuta-

ble, that things have not always been completely moral, in this dome of *intended* reform. "The worst men that society could produce; not possessed of common morality; drunkards, swearers, &c &c; men who "*persecuted* the well meaning prisoners," were appointed to situations in this prison. This was, undoubtedly, an "abuse" of power, disgraceful to the Inspectors, and highly injurious to the institution. It was a fact that deserved exposure—that it would have been criminal to have concealed. But what does the writer say in his conclusion? He has been "*threatened with a dismissal by the Inspectors, if he should expose errors.*" It would seem that the Inspectors, for some unknown reason, would not allow *even a Keeper*, to have independence of mind enough, to discover and point out errors. Like the sagacious oyster, they would keep every thing within themselves. If I mistake not, this very letter, upon being discovered, formed a matter of accusation against the author and another Keeper who acted as his amanuensis, before the Inspectors, and produced their immediate dismissal from the prison. I always knew it to be high treason for a *convict*, even remotely, to hint at any *abuse*, or point out any *error* in the government of the institution; but I never had the smallest idea, that a *keeper* was punishable by *dismissal*, for giving his opinions to a member of the Legislature upon the subject.

## PRINCIPAL KEEPER.

It is the Principal Keeper's duty to officiate in the absence of the Inspectors, to punish the convicts for *actual* offences against the internal laws of the institution, to visit them frequently, and become rather a soother than an irritator of their feelings. He should seldom become intoxicated, and never officially act whilst under the influence of liquor. He should never aggravate petty infractions, of more petty internal regulations, but should rather be disposed to treat them with their merited contempt. He should be slow to anger, and lenient in his conduct and treatment of his fellow man; and where rebuke, gentle and unprovoking, would be equally serviceable, he should rather use it, than resort to harsher measures. When one of his underlings has brought up a convict before him, for trial, he should strive to hear his story with attention, without stopping and crossing him, like a half-bred, quibbling pettifogger, and endeavouring to irritate him; and he should ever remember, that an unbiased independency of mind, in the discharge of his duties, is invariably expected from him, and that he is not bound, in every case, to punish, because a (*drunken, swearing, &c. &c.*) Keeper, has brought a convict up before him. A small spice of humanity, should season all his actions; and when inflicting a punishment upon a convict, he should convince him, that he is

constrained by *duty*, and not moved by *inclination*. Diligence, is inseparable from his station ; for the safety of the convicts depends upon him. He should " be constant in his visits through every part of the " prison, and be careful that no one escape. He " has *no* power, except, in attempts of that nature " to strike a prisoner." His duties are arduous, various and important, and the least remissness might be productive, of every thing disastrous. " At every " meeting of the Inspectors, he presents a written " report, containing the number of prisoners, and " those newly received and discharged, with the " particulars of every occurrence in the prison."

The principal keeper resides, with his family, in the prison, and has the entire benefit of an elegant, spacious and prolific garden, producing some good fruit and a great plenty of vegetables, of many kinds, intended, originally, for the convicts ; and the State *generously* pays for all his fuel, light, soap and washing, and furnishes him with menials from the convicts in the prison. He receives a salary of Fifteen hundred dollars per annum ; and generally receives Two hundred and sixty dollars, per annum, for boarding the Resident Physician ; and Two hundred and fifty dollars, per annum, for entertaining the Inspectors, who meet semi-monthly, or oftener at the prison. He is allowed to appoint a DEPUTY, (to officiate in his absence, with all the powers and responsibility of principal keeper) who receives a salary of Six hun-

dred dollars per annum. The Deputy Keeper has a multitude of little local cares, which it is unnecessary to enumerate.

### SUPERINTENDENT OF WEAVING.

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The Superintendent of Weaving, should make no purchases for the prison, either of wool or any other article ; receive no yarn from the Contractors, but at the prison gate ; and deliver no cloth, when manufactured by the convicts. These are, palpably, the individual duties of the Agent. The duty of the Superintendent of weaving is confined, or intended so to be, exclusively to the loom ; he is placed there, emphatically, to teach the convicts, and to see that the labour, in his department, is performed agreeably to order. When the yarn is delivered by the Contractors, to be manufactured, it should be handed over to him ; he should have it sized, dyed, spooled, warped and wove ; and it should *then* be his duty to deliver the cloth to the Agent, to be by him forwarded to the Contractors. But, if this were the case, his office would appear, as it really is, a perfect sinecure. He never instructs the convicts : the convict-superintendents do it for him. From the time that the yarn is taken to the workshops, until it is actually manufactured into cloth, he perhaps never knows any thing at all about it. When the weaver takes in his cloth, it is examined by

him, the convict-superintendent then rolls it, and prepares it for delivery. At a regular day in the week, *the Superintendent of weaving performs the duty of the Agent*, by delivering the cloth, from the prison cart, to the several Contractors in the city. Now to dispense with this valuable officer's services, and to curtail the annual expenses of the prison, to the amount of his salary (Seven hundred and fifty dollars) it is only necessary, to require the Agent to perform his own duties, to make *all* purchases for this factory, and to receive the yarn from, and deliver the cloth to the Contractors; and *then*, either to appoint one of the fifteen Assistant Keepers to superintend the weaving, exempting him from the night-duty of watching, or, to make one of the convicts (and of about one hundred weavers, there are always, to a certainty, thirty in the prison, who are capable) under the direction of the Agent, a special superintendent for the purpose, holding out some inducement to ensure his industry and unre-mitted attention.

### ASSISTANT KEEPERS.

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The Assistants of the Principal Keeper should not be as stupid as Corœbus, nor as inhuman as Domitian. They should be able to designate, with accuracy, the letters of the English Alphabet, and not be so immoral as to drink up more than *half* of their

salaries. They should, invariably, be Mechanics, capable of instructing the convicts, and not lazy vagrants, without science, skill, or gentility. Possessed of elevated minds, they should be perfectly conversant with life, and practised in those feelings which dignify the man, and do honor to the Christian ; instead of being impudent and ignorant rustics, just escaped from some filthy cow-yard ; or *infected* debauchees, or *daily-wasting* drunkards, but one solitary remove from the poisonous reptile, that grovels from life, after an ephemeral existence, into an eventual and unlamented nihility ; and who are acquainted with nothing but the grossest vulgarity. If a well-bred convict should, by misfortune, be thrown within their power, they should not be allowed to agonize his mind—to irritate him upon every occasion—nor to menace him with unmerited punishment, unless it should be deemed advisable, by the enlightened Officers, to reduce his gentility to a level with their own. He will, to be sure, more readily, yield a *silent* respect to their power, after they have (as they most beautifully express it) *horsed* him a little, and to a pride-swollen atom of tyranny, that will be a great satisfaction ; but, *persecution* is entirely too abstract from their duty, to be tolerated, even remotely, in name. They should not be “*swearers*,” nor be otherwise immoral men ; for through the exhibition of their vices to the convicts, the cause of reformation is enervated, if not entirely destroyed. To de-

fine all the little duties of this petty officer, would be irksome to the reader :—to trace him in his pompous strides through the shop in which he is stationed ; to follow him as he creeps through the prison halls, in his watches ; and to pursue him through the varied rounds of his petty avocation. I shall not therefore attempt it. And it would be equally uninteresting for me to depicture the creature, after the artist-hand of an ex-keeper, has so handsomely sketched him. A shade of brutality, a tint of ignorance, and a feature of turgescence, might however be added, which would make the likeness, more veritably striking. He would then appear, as he really is, a pride-bloated turnkey of a felon prison—the sewer-menial of the people—disgusting in aspect, pitiful in conduct, and sanguinary in heart. Some author (I believe Zimmerman) says, that presumption, ignorance and proud stupidity, are, infinitely, in higher estimation, than the noblest exercise of reason. The officers, in general, are evidences of its truth. They possess none of that refinement, that suavity, that intelligence, that self-distrust, which marks the path of the philosopher, the christian, and the man. Sacrificing the interests of humanity, and discarding the suggestions of truth, self-aggrandizement is their only seeking, their only wish, their only thought. The conduct of the Keepers is particularly vituperable. Practising, under the umbrage of the law, the most horrible brutality,

they are exempted from its merited consequences, by reason of the pitiable destitution of the convict, when released from his confinement. I once saw, (and shall never forget my feelings, when I beheld the blood spirting after the weapon,) the Principal Keeper, with both of his hands clinching the nudile handle of a corn-broom, strike a poor maniac, in the prison yard, apparently, with all his strength, upon the crown of his head, for treating him with disrespect, after having, by his levity, irritated his feelings. And this too, was not in a moment of passion ; for the Keeper himself told me, and it is a strong proof of his deliberation, that " he merely did so, to test the *insanity* of the convict—to see if he could *feel* it." If the convict had not, in his very knowledge, been respited from execution, *on account of his insanity*; if his sentence had not been commuted to imprisonment, several years ago, by the Legislature, *on account of his insanity*; if he had not been *continued* in confinement, for thirteen or fourteen years, beyond the period that convicts, of equally desperate crimes, have ordinarily been in the clemency and justice of the law, *on account of his insanity*; the Principal Keeper might, perhaps, in some degree, be excused, for making such a speculation, upon his distracted state of mind. But as it is, it is a brutality, disgraceful to him as a man, and damning to him as a Christian. He can have no extenuation allowed him—for he injured the absent. He committed a

sin against the disposition of that providence, whose wisdom had bereft the poor convict of his reason ; and his crime was little less than that of the giants, an actual and voluntary rebellion against heaven.

Mr. Ward sagaciously observes, in one of his Cantos, that,

“ Children, they will something gather

“ From the *example* of their Father.”

The relationship *legally* subsisting between the Principal Keeper and his Assistants, is very like that between a parent and his children. He is their Father, and they mould their actions in conformity with his. Inhumanity in *him*, produces inhumanity in *them* ; and the convict is, invariably, the melancholly sufferer. I have seen too much of their brutality—I have realized too much actual distress from it—not to give it a hearty execration. The death of Lynch, the miserable man, who committed suicide (I believe) in 1819, was often a subject, to me, of serious contemplation. He was a poor, unlettered man, with a wife and two children. There was a natural simplicity about him, that marked him to every thinking being, as a perfect novice in crime. I often saw him the laughing-stock of the convicts around him. I believe that I had never spoken to him, until one day, as I was walking, to and fro, in the prison-yard, turning over, in my own mind, my individual cares, he very politely addressed me, and

asked me if I would be kind enough to advise with him in a business of the highest importance to his subsequent happiness. I told him, if my counsel could be of any service to him, that I should not withhold it ; but, that my own immediate cares, engrossed so essentially the faculties of my soul, that I was, greatly, indifferent to the miseries of others. He hesitated for a moment ; when, after informing me that he should speak, *confidentially*, on the subject, he said, that one of the Keepers, whom he named to me, had himself told him, to take care of himself, and get into no *trouble* (which meant *punishment*)—*that he cohabited with his wife* ; and that she had made him promise her, to *favour* him (her husband) whilst in the prison. At first, I thought him in jest ; but then for him (the husband) to jest, on so serious a subject, was extremely improbable. I, however, told him, that the Keeper was merely joking him. “What !” said he, “joking me upon so delicate a point ? What business has he to do it ? Does he agonize my feelings as a matter of right then, because I am a *felon*, by bringing to me the tidings of my wife’s prostitution ? And not only that, but that he, himself, is her actual paramour ? Good God, is this a *pardonable* joke ?” I agreed with him, perfectly : if it was a *joke*, it was, in the highest degree, brutal, unnatural and unfeeling ; and if *not*, it was a fiend-like avowal of a crime, deserving of a halter. “You are,” said he, “by profession, a law-

“yer ; will you be kind enough to inform me, whether or not, that a convict can be taken out of this prison, and tried for murder, whilst under sentence for another crime ?” I understood his meaning, and answered him in the affirmative. For a moment, I entertained doubts of his sanity ; but, on turning, intentionally, the tide of conversation, I found him to be rational, though greatly depressed. After moralizing, with him, for a little while, and freely expressing my abomination of such a desperately wicked thought, as that which he had entertained, he became thoughtful, and was silent for a short time, uttering not a single syllable. At length, as if he had just formed a resolution to that effect, he said to me, “I have two dear little children, and a respectable brother, and I will not further disgrace them, by being hanged, for ridding the world of a villain.” And he immediately left me. The next day but one after, he stalked about the prison yard, in a state of mental derangement. He talked, incoherently, to every one whom he met, without discrimination ; the convicts laughing at him, and the keepers menacing him with instant punishment. He continued so for two days. During the second night of his derangement, he *cut his own throat*, and died early on the following morning. I went to the Hospital to see him. It was a shocking spectacle, and several Keepers and convicts were gathered around him. There stood the Keeper whose as-

severations had so tortured him. He expressed his astonishment at the desperation of the unfortunate man ; avowed himself to be an intimate friend of his brother's ; and to be somewhat acquainted with his wife ; whom, at the request of Lynch, he had often called to see. He said, that he had been in the habit of *joking* him about different things, and that he thought him to be a very simple and good kind of man. Well indeed, thought I, while my eyes were riveted upon him, and my heart was quivering with horror, if your mere *levity* produced this catastrophe, you may bless your lucky stars, that it cost you not your life ; and you may be allowed to pray, that you will not, in the judgment of eternal wisdom, be a companion in his torment, as you were an accessory to his crime. Cicero says, that We should be as careful of our *words* as our *actions*, and as ~~far from~~ *speaking* as *doing* ill : *Quantum a rerum turpitudine abes, tantum te a verborum libertate sejungas*. Well had it been for Lynch, if the caution had been observed. To say the very least of it, for the Keeper to joke upon such a subject, was a most horrid brutality. But these creatures would do the greatest violence to their own feelings, were they not to act brutally, upon every occasion, to a miserable convict. " They persecute the well meaning prisoners," and secretly rejoice at their agony of heart. Generally, poverty-stricken through their idleness, they grovel to the prison, rag-covered mendicants.

They act as *substitutes* for the Assistants, with the most abject and degrading servility, until vacancies occur, and they themselves are appointed Keepers ; when inflated with their mighty consequence, and eager to show their power, they practise upon the convicts, without scruple or reserve, every thing abominable, disgusting, and inhuman. To a sensible man, they are ever the same : the trappings of petty power, only serving, more effectually, to discover their littleness, and the horrid texture of their hearts.

“ For whether on mountain, or on hill,  
 “ Pigmies, you’ll own, are Pigmies still.”

Born in vulgarity, and cradled in ignorance, they have not a virtuous sentiment, that would dignify the head, nor a solitary feeling, that would do honour to the heart.—Can reform be expected under the administration of such men ? Undoubtedly not.—But where is the remedy ?—With the Inspectors who appoint them. They can certainly select men for office, who are not “ *drunkards, swearers, &c. &c.*,” who are moral and industrious, and who will discharge the duties of their office, with fidelity, without *persecuting* the *well meaning* convicts, or setting them the constant example of crime. Or, if they cannot, it is downright folly to pursue a system of punishment, with the hope of attaining its object, the *reformation* of the punished, when the very means which are

used, are, most desperately, immoral. "What is morally wrong, can never be politically right." The Keepers, under the present system, are continually in the view of the convicts, sometimes are sociable, and converse with them freely. A special strictness, should therefore be observed, in the appointment of such officers. But, I think I hear it said, that it is impossible to find *industrious* and *moral* men, to fill such situations. Be it so. I admit that very few virtuous and industrious men, would be willing to immure themselves within the walls of a felon prison, without being allowed to visit their families or friends, oftener than once in *fifteen* days ; to drag out their tardy hours in laziness—their days, without active employment, and their nights, without balmy sleep—as the Assistant Keepers are necessarily compelled to, for Five hundred dollars per annum. But what then ? there is still a remedy for the evil. Shut the convict up in a solitary cell, and let the *immoral* keeper utter his profanity, and exhibit his vices, to the incorruptible walls.

## CONVICTS.

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Man is an *imitative* animal. From his cradle to his grave, he is learning to do, what he sees others do.

Jefferson.

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The convicts are, generally, very bad, wicked and ignorant men ; with all the feelings, passions and propensities of man, in unfettered society. It was, perhaps, necessary to make this premise, as there are many well-meaning persons in existence, who, viewing crime through the dull medium of ignorance, believe it to have the faculty, like the finger of Midas, of transmuting what it touches ;—of instantly changing a man into a dæmon. I have heard children, while passing through the prison as visitors, with the utmost astonishment exclaim, as they narrowly eyed the convicts, “ Why, dear me, they all look like men ! ” I have heard middle aged persons wondering that they were not chained ; and I once remember to have seen an elderly gentleman, run, precipitately, out of one of the prison

shops, because one of the convicts had merely moved from his seat.—We are, in matter and mind, the same identical being; actuated by the same impulses, exerting the same energies, and endowed with the same faculties. It is only in the peculiar manner of exerting those faculties, as directed, either by our actual want or diversity of education, that we, essentially, differ. The precepts of morality graduate, greatly, according to the contraction or expansion of the human mind. Thus, you see a man, whose uncultivated mind, in his infantile years, was familiar with scenes of depravity and wickedness, viewing their subsequent repetition, with neither astonishment, nor horror. To him, they are no novelties: he saw them in his infancy, he is not disgusted with them, in his manhood. But that cultivated and virtuous soul, whose vision is unaccustomed to turpitude, and who is not restrained, from the commission of crime, by the mere *fear* of punishment, shrinks from vice as from the death-breathing Siroc. The stigma—the odium—the degradation of vice, are more awfully present to his soul, and operate more powerfully upon it, than all the penal codes, from the days of Solon, up to the present time. Place that man in any situation of life, and some traces of his virtue, will linger still around him. Like the gaudy sculpture, of a fallen column, in the region of desolation, his worth will be perceptible, through the very solitude which

surrounds him. Vice creeps slowly upon the soul. In a *moment*, no man ever reaches its summit : *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*. He becomes gradually wicked, if in his infancy, he is virtuous.

Confined together; and having continual opportunities, of unrestricted conversation, it is natural that the convicts should consummate friendships with, and imbibe the principles of each other. However indignant, at first, a man may be, at the loathsome lisplings of vice, when he is so situated that he cannot avoid hearing them, they *soon* lose their primal horror and very speedily, become familiar. Once tolerable, the step to the embrace of vice, becomes easy in the extreme. Young villians, soon become old knaves. The elder, instruct the younger, in the science of iniquity—day after day, they concert plans of future perfidy—and nightly, they discourse upon nothing but depravity. Murder, becomes a trifle, when it is necessary to their purposes; and many convicts, are within this prison, who have not scrupled to commit it. Connections formed with dissolute, abandoned and desperate men;—men, practised in dissimulation and blackened by crime—whose determination is, the attainment of their *ends*, without compunction at the *means*;—such connections, are destructive of morality and virtue, and expose the mind to all that is detestable in turpitude. Innumerable instances might be adduced to verify the fact. Convicts, who had, mutually, pro-

mised to become partners in iniquity, and who had concerted their plans before their liberation, have often been seen waiting for each other, in the very view of the prison, and departing, in company, to practice their villianny. Some have been detected, in their nefarious attempts, almost before they were without the purlieus of the prison. One instance is known of a convict's being liberated, detected in a theft, indicted, tried, convicted, sentenced to a ten years imprisonment, and returned to the prison, *all in one day*. And many instances of *second* and *third*, and some few of fourth, fifth and sixth convictions, serve essentially to prove, that the present system, from the very intermixing of the convicts, is rather *generative*, than destructive, of vice. Among the convicts, there are generally several very small boys, whose age would indicate the utter impossibility, of a maturity of guilt. They are placed among men, more experienced in crime, who treat them as adults, and impart their feelings to them freely. It is a common thing to hear a boy who can scarcely reach the top of a man's pocket, talk openly of divesting it of its valuable contents. And, indeed, one would be led to suppose, that some attempt of the kind generally succeeds a liberation, from the circumstance of there being so many *second* comers, at present, confined, who are scarcely of full age. My memory serves me with respect to the names of several of them (although there are many more)

now confined, who were mere children at their *first* conviction—Johnson, Dunn, M'Comb, M'Cormick, Underwood, Solton, and Allen, They were imprisoned, *novices*—they were liberated, theoretical *proficients*. Reared up, as it were, to the business of crime, their pardon was but a license, to the practice of their profession. Without a knowledge of any but a prison life, and without any principles, but those imbibed from an intercourse with bad men, what could have been expected from them *then*, what may be expected from them *now*? Familiar with crime, in their *childhood*, and practising it, with pleasure, in their *youth*, what hope can be entertained, of their reformation, in their *virility*? It is preposterous to suppose it. The present system of punishment, inducted them to crime, by allowing their intercourse and conversation, with veterans in iniquity, and it has, emphatically, confirmed them, as knaves and desperadoes, during their future existence. There are now a few more of these unlucky boys, educating, in the same manner, in this capacious college of depravity, who will, no doubt, be soon permitted, to reduce their theory to practice, by wasting and agonizing the vitals of society. From their peculiar forwardness, and the pains taken to instruct them, by the experienced convicts, to whose charge they are committed (by the officers of the prison), it may fairly be presumed, that they will be equally apt scholars, with those al-

ready graduated, and in no respect be a discredit, to their valuable preceptors. At present, I can only think of the names of Tryon, Wilson, Farrel, Adams and Blake ; although there are several others, both white and black, of the same, if not of a lesser, age, in the prison : only one of them rising fifteen years of age, and all of them have been a considerable time confined. There are, also, a few FEMALE children, in the same much-to-be-lamented situation ; and from the characters of their tutors, an inference may be drawn of their future usefulness to society, and of the ultimate probability of *their* reformation. And while I am speaking of them, let me, for a moment, trespass upon the time of the reader, by adverting to their situations, in a more particular and special manner. From their domestic habits, I esteem it absolutely certain, that they are always, at the same age, less depraved than boys, and can, consequently, be more easily diverted from the purposes of vice. The rude and hardy boy, from the time that he can crawl, is attracted from his home, by novelty and fashion. His enjoyments are abroad—there he revels with delight—although vice is ranking round him, and menacing his ruin. Alluring in her aspect, and specious in her apparel, earth appears to be her plaything, and heaven to be her home. The joys of the female child are entirely domestic. Around the fireside of her home, she forms a character for life. Does vice intrude upon its solitude, with

her fascinations and her wiles, the smile of innocence rebukes her, and she vanishes forever. The female acquires her knowledge, at the very hearth of purity ; removed afar from the allurements and fascinations of vice. At eleven or twelve years of age, the current of her thoughts, can scarcely be so turbid with wickedness, as to make her an object of marked detestation, or to outlaw her entirely from the sympathies of the world. At such an age, it can hardly be imagined that female children, would be *fit* companions for an abandoned harridan, nursed in the lap of infamy, and tutored in the school of corruption. Incarcerated, at a period, when imitation forms the entire occupation of their minds ; when their faculties are expanding beneath the influence of experience, and novelty is coursing too rapidly around them, to allow them an instant of seasonable reflection ; when every idea which they entertain, is borrowed from those with whom they are intimate, and every impression made upon their hearts, is by the signet of other characters :—incarcerated at such a period, and in such a sink of corruption, and among the most depraved wretches in existence, what good can be expected from them in subsequent life ? what wish for their future usefulness and propriety, can ever be realized ? I have noticed them, at the moment of their admission to the prison ; I have seen the tears laving their infant cheeks, while their hearts seemed almost to be

bursting; contrition apparently hung around their aspects, which grief had convulsed into the most pitiable distortion:—I have seen them, in their agony, depart for the Female Hall, as though it were the lonely catacomb of their wishes, their hopes and their desires. Viewing them as children, artless and inexperienced, I could not but feel for them, an involuntary sympathy. I have felt for their destitution, and commiserated their youthful sorrows, until my heart almost execrated, the very law which they had infracted. But, how often after such feelings, and before they fairly had subsided, have I seen them paraded before the Principal Keeper, for violating some pitiful *internal* regulation, and heard them as profligately vulgar, wanton and profane, as the most indelicate harlot, in the purlieus of a brothel. Lost to modesty and shame, and confirmed in a blushless assurance, I have seen them confronting each other, before the judge of their disputes and shocking him with the enormity of their conduct, and the horrid tenor of their discourse. Educated by those of riper years, with whom they are constrained to associate, and with whom, in the prison, they are completely on a level, they readily imbibe their feelings, and learn to practice their improprieties. One thought of viciousness, uncorrected, or rather encouraged, most naturally, leads to another and another, until the female novice, becomes a proficient in wickedness,

and a fit subject for that dome of prostitution, in which she is generally found, at the period of her liberation. The case of the *Tillman* family, affords a lesson upon this subject. The mother (and I believe the father,) died in the prison. The *oldest* daughter, was imprisoned when *eleven* years of age, upon a *first* conviction ; and since then, (of *twenty-one* transpired years,) she has been about Nineteen years and a half in this prison, and the residue, a drunken prostitute upon the town. It is now about a twelvemonth, since she was remanded, for not complying with the condition, of the executive pardon from her imprisonment, upon a *fourth* conviction. A younger daughter was sentenced, upon her first conviction, when only thirteen years of age, to the prison for eighteen months. Her *second* conviction was of stealing a sum of money, in the brothel where she resided, and her sentence, under that conviction, has long since expired. They both begun their career of infamy, in childhood. Instead at that time, of having a salutary correction given them, and a necessary restraint put upon their actions, they were thrust and ushered into the company of creatures, who lost to virtue themselves, took a pride in corrupting others :—creatures, who instead of withering with a virtuous indignation, the first budding of youthful vice, rather smiled it into life, and fructified the soil in which it germinated, with the dew of their approbation :—

creatures, who are bandied about, between a prison and a brothel, until death, charitably, eases them, of their worthless lives of guilt, and leaves not a virtuous bosom, in existence, to deplore them. The convict-women are, if possible, more depraved than the men; they have less reason, more passion and no shame. Collected generally, from the vitiated sewer of venality, they are schooled in its depravity, and practised in its impudence. The utmost vulgarity, obscenity and wantonness, characterizes their language, their habits and their manners. They, generally, carry on a sort of *distant*, illicit courtship and commerce with the men, which, when discovered, is, always, exemplarily punished. Their bestial salacity, in their visual amours, is agonizing to every fibre of delicacy and virtue, and sickening to the bosom of chastity and love. O! that they were not human. Morality, then, would not be tortured with disgust, nor would I

“blush and hang my head,  
To own myself a man.”

Particularization is impossible; delicacy forbids it and modesty commands me to forbear. Well has it been said, by the celebrated Kotzebue; “Nature  
“ created *man* a medium, upon the ladder of per-  
“ fection; he never rises to the highest step, never  
“ sinks to the lowest; he is never quite so *good*,  
“ never quite so *bad*, as a woman.” A bad wo-

man, is incomparably worse, than a bad man ; and a good one, is infinitely better, than the best man breathing.

It is really wonderful to observe, the general dearth of talent, among the convicts. Among so many men as there are in this prison, gathered as it were, from the four winds of the heavens, one would suppose, that some few of *exalted* literary acquirements might, invariably, be found. But, to the credit of education be it said, the convicts are, generally, ignorant and unlettered men. So unusual is it for a man, of any erudition, to be found among them, that when one actually appears, the tinkling of his fame is heard, many years after his absence, even oftentimes proceeding, from the very lips of the Keepers. An acquaintance with " Webster's Spelling Book," and with Arithmetic as far as the " Single Rule of Three," constitutes (with even many of the enlightened Keepers) a convict, a *good* scholar. I remember a fellow whose mere etymological parsing, obtained for him, a celebrity, among the Keepers as well as the convicts, as extensive as that which the Colossus of literature enjoyed, during his valuable life time, in the republic of letters. He had a little smattering of English Etymology, which gave him the reputation, of being an eminent grammarian ; bnt he knew as much about Syntactical parsing, as the most enlightened monkey, in ths island of Borneo. He was, however, the critic

of the prison. Keepers submitted to him their literary disputes, and incredulity was hushed into immediate satisfaction, by the reason, and justness, and infallibility of his decisions. Some, confidentially, communicated to him, their conscientious scruples, and his casuistry, immediately, put pyrrhonism at rest. A line, from his pen, to the friends of a convict, in the estimation both of Keeper and of convict, like the querimonious notes of Orpheus, would draw tears from the very stones. Nothing was perfect, in the *literary* world of the prison, unless it received, a wonder-working finish, from his well acknowledged talents. He could draw a petition, for a would-be-appointed Keeper, or fit a gold ring to his finger, with as much exactness and approved precision, as nicety might require, or curiosity might wish. He worked at whitesmithing, and almost every other trade practised in the prison; and performed a thousand things, that none but an uncommon genius, like himself, would be capable of, or would be allowed to attempt. Was there any thing to be done nicely, he must be consulted about it; and generally in the sequel, it was committed to his skill. Like the Parish Clerk in the Review, he was

“ Painter, Glazier, *Whitesmith* here

“ In short, he was, *factotem*. ”

It was really diverting to see him on a Sunday

morning, holding as it were, a levee of his envious rivals, each of them armed with some long sought intricacy, to pose the *learned* man. Some appeared with written questions upon slates, others with intricate or ambiguous passages in books, and many, with oral puzzles, hanging impatient upon their lips ; and although he was unable to unriddle all their mysteries, yet *confidence*, *evasion*, and brow-beating *invective*, (the sure companions of a supercilious ignorance,) were so much at his command, that he lost not a tittle of his elevated character. This was the celebrated mathematician, who proved conclusively, to the satisfaction of nine different Keepers, who were learned even to bursting turgidity, that the three angles of a triangle, are not equal to two right angles, all the Mathesis from the days of Euclid to the present hour "to the contrary notwithstanding."

O ! had he still continued there,  
His mind to science turning,  
The *Convicts* and the *Keepers* all  
By now had burst with learning.

But he was pardoned, and he only left behind him, like the translated Elijah, the mantle of his greatness—the fame of having existed ; although, it is warmly hoped, by his former friends, that he will speedily return.

There are many convicts, in this prison, who have been confined, in a similar prison, in the Eastern and Southern States. Some of them, within the last few years, have served out, and been pardoned from, several lengthy sentences, in Charlestown, Windsor, Trenton, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Richmond prisons ; but it is singularly a fact, that during Three Years of close and curious observation, I never knew but one convict in the prison, who was generally recognized as an ex-incumbent, of the mines of Connecticut. When a villian is liberated, from any other prison, but that of Connecticut, it would seem, that he just takes a trip to New-York, to try his luck, where he is, perhaps, again detected in his perfidy, and doomed to his merited punishment. Windsor and Philadelphia ex-incumbents, are, I think, the most numerous. All such itinerary creatures, are known almost in an instant, by the imprisoned convicts, when they are put among them. They find themselves naturally, at home, in a prison—and they cannot conceal their perfect acquaintance with its habits, and their familiarity with the incidents of a prison life.

It is a common thing, among the convicts, to find one who has used a variety of names ; and more especially, among those who have been the incumbents of other prisons. Immediately upon his migration, a convict assumes a different name, which lasts him, in general, only while sojourning in one place ; a

change of quarters, always bringing a change of name. One of them told me, that he once stopped at a tavern, in the western part of the State of New-York, immediately after dark, with a view of tarrying during the night. He gave his portmanteau to the host for safe keeping, with his name, just assumed ; and after supper he retired to rest. There were several travellers in the house. In the morning, he arose very early ; the landlord was not to be seen ; he wanted his portmanteau ; his name had been marked upon it, but what that name was, he had entirely forgotten. The landlord's appearance, relieved him from his dilemma, and he departed on his journey. This cunning assumption of fictitious names, is often productive of an unhappy confusion at the prison. Sometimes the distant friends of convicts, hear of their incarceration ; they wander many dreary miles from their homes, to visit the unfortunates ; they inquire for them, at the prison, by their *réal* names, but no such persons are known ; search is fruitless, where there is a disposition, to remain undiscovered ; and they return disappointed and unsatisfied from the pursuit. Wives are often seen, with their infant children upon their arms, looking after their husbands, parents after their children, and children after their parents. Many persons, who have been absent, for years together, from their families, are sought for unsuccessfully, although they are here confined.

I used to walk about the prison, and was curious enough, to observe every thing that passed, without lisping my opinion upon any subject, although often asked to do so. My mind was, always, too much depressed, to indulge in any levity. The convicts, regarded me as a formal and solitary being, from whom little pleasantry could be expected, and with whom very little freedom could be taken. I wandered, among them, in a state of partial abstraction ; with no valued friend—no agreeable associate—no welcome companion. The scene was too much chequered with misery, to allow me any feeling, but that of pointed grief. Many of those around me, could drown the remembrance of their adversity ; I could find no draught, that would sink mine into oblivion. The cruel dart of my injury, had been barbed by ingratitude ; and apathy seemed identified with the feelings of my relatives. Sorrow appeared to be the inseparable companion of my fortunes :—her wrinkled visage, and dejecting mien, were ever in my view. My relatives were, occasionally, allowed to call and see me, and to inform me of their exertions, to procure my liberation. Sometimes my hopes were animated, often times they were depressed. My mind was in a state, continually, of the most maddening fermentation. I ardently sought a restoration to liberty, but O ! how often I despaired of realizing it. At one hour, I felt the assurance that my liberation was at hand ; at another

er, my hopes were chilled, by the remembrance of disappointment. It was with such feelings, and under such impressions, that the following was penned.

To the pallet of straw, where the prisoner lay,  
In an agonized hour of sorrow,  
Hope darted her ~~chaery~~, her life-giving ray,  
And said "I'll release thee to-morrow."  
His poor weeping heart, caught the echoing thrill,  
The balm 'twas of exquisite healing,  
And light was his pulse, as the dew of yon hill,  
And purely extatic his feeling.

His fancy depicted the smile that would greet  
His return, to his home of affection,  
His wife, and the sweet little babe that he'd meet,  
Were dear to his inmost reflection.  
The bright tear of joy, that would welcome him home,  
Stood trembling, in chrystal, before him,  
The gleam of delight, that would hallow his dome  
Like a sun-burst of glory, play'd o'er him.

His soul is translated to regions of bliss—  
His babe he folds close to his bosom,  
His wife's ruby lips, glow with constancy's kiss,  
And vocal, 'twere death now to lose him :  
His breathings of rapture, creative now seem,  
He feels a new transport each minute,  
But sorrow o'er takes him—he wakes—'twas a dream,  
With luxury—rapture—grief, in it.

It boasts no poetic beauty : it, uncouthly, portrays  
the feelings, of expectation blighted.

David Williams, for whom the Legislature made an appropriation to build a special prison, in Cayuga County, several years ago, is now in this prison; his punishment having been commuted, about Seven years since. It will be remembered that he was convicted of murder; but Legislative interference, on account of his insanity, saved him from the scaffold, and doomed him to imprisonment. He has been confined, altogether, about eighteen years; and his mind has arrived at that pitiable state, of enervation and credulity, when the most nonsensical fantasy, at mere suggestion, becomes decidedly a truth. He believes, that by cutting his own throat, about twelve years ago, he discomfited Buonaparte, and occasioned his dethronement. He ascribes to himself, the success of Perry and of M'Donough; and attributes many of such important events, entirely, to his own imprisoned exertions. He is now fighting the battles, of the Patriots of South America. Poor creature! his history would fill an octavo.

Among the convicts, nothing is more common than a political dispute. You will hear a fellow, whose entire life has been a contravention of the laws, and for whose immorality, scarcely a parallel can be found, advocating the cause of America, and rudely depicting the blessedness of liberty, with as much zeal and enthusiasm, as the most virtuous patriot in existence. I heard one Sunday morning, (which is the general time in the prison for scientific dis-

cussion) a dispute upon this subject, between a Scotchman and a Vermonter, which had nearly been attended with serious consequences. It was occasioned by the Scotchman's finding fault with every thing American—every production, animal, vegetable and mineral—which the child of the green mountains, bore, for a little while, very patiently, and without uttering a syllable. At length, however, he became somewhat nettled, and, sternly, asked Sawney, “ what brought him over, to such an “ abominable country ? and why he ever left his “ native highlands of heather and of witches ? and “ what business he had here ? ” and many such questions, which, when propounded, with asperity, served, greatly, to ruffle the temper of the Scot, and to produce, on his part, replies, equally tart and unpleasing. The Vermonter had been to Londonderry, in Ireland, at a time when a Highland Regiment was, temporarily, stationed there. He had seen, he said, the *Kilties*, (meaning the Scotch soldiers) stalking about the walls, and through the streets, with a brisly *pig's paw*, and a candle-battered *bap*, in either hand, which, in the open day they devoured with the most ravenous appetites. He reminded the Scotchman of his *propitious* her-ring, which (the historian Mavor says,) the aged matrons of Scotland stand on the shore side and call to, when in obedience to the summons, thousands in large schools, flock immediately to the land. The first thing, he said, that would strike a traveller,

when approaching a house, on the sea-board of Scotland, would be the eyes of a million of herrings, peeping from the gable end of it, where they are usually hung together, in *strings* or stacks, to dry, as if, to serve as sentinels, to guard the mansion from surprise. He was very apt at ridicule, and his remarks were well calculated to cut Sawney to the quick, and to raise, among the by-standing convicts, a laugh at his expense. In turn, the Scotchman ridiculed, reviled and calumniated; but the current of opinion, and the risibility was against him. He bore very hard upon Jonathan, but it was without effect. Hasty pudding and pork, pumpkin pye and molasses, ingons and wooden bowls, appeared, however, not the less ludicrous, or characteristic of the east, when touched with the *sal* of sarcasm from the lip of Mr. Sawney. They both became, at length, angry, and were on the point of deciding their patriotic dispute, at fisticuffs, (as patriots of every country, from the Roman Cassius, to the less renowned, but, perhaps, not less patriotic P\*\*\* of New-York, have been frequently wont to do) when the snail-paced Keeper, most happily arrived; and his presence, at once, paralysed their energies, and put a damper upon their patriotism. The altercation confirmed to my mind, the opinion, of St. Pierre, that low and uneducated people, have a happier faculty of ridicule, than those in more elevated life. Their minds acquire a natural bias to it, through the operation of envy—habit makes

the practice agreeable and easy, and a continual current, of burlesque reflections, leads them to the conception of any thing ridiculous, and enables them to turn any thing more readily, into ridicule, than those who are only influenced, occasionally, by a grotesqueness of thought. I had been standing alone, and silent, in an attiguous corner, during the dispute; and at its sequel, I withdrew. The Scot followed me,—he was the most enlightened of the two disputants—and after some few preliminary remarks, he gave me, unsolicitedly, an opinion of the Eastern people, in almost the following words, with a view, perhaps, of drawing me, into a similar wrangle, to that which I just had witnessed. He was one of those impertinently loquacious, button-holding gentlemen, from whom a man, can scarcely unfasten himself, who gives the most trifling attention, even in courtesy, to their prattle.—“ I have been, said he, Four years from my native land : three years and two months of which, I lived in the Eastern States. I had an opportunity of knowing the character of the inhabitants—and I always was studying it. Let me tell you, sir,” said he, “ there is no moral tie that can bind them :—they have no principle of common honesty. Gold is their God—the very idol of their souls. To obtain it, they will reduce the orphan to penury, and the widow to starvation. without shame and without remorse. All of them sing psalms, with

“ the richest whine of hypocrisy, and, profess to be  
 “ most strictly christians, although the very basis of  
 “ christianity, god-like charity, is foreign to their  
 “ hearts. Judas Iscariot, after betraying our Sa-  
 “ viour, felt a compunction, and went and hanged  
 “ himself ; but these people have no consciences—  
 “ no sympathies—no remorse ; they would sell  
 “ and crucify, our Lord and Saviour anew, were he  
 “ now upon earth, for the one tenth. of the thirty  
 “ pieces bestowed by the Jewish Chief Priests.  
 “ No reliance can be placed upon their promises ;  
 “ for they only perform them, when it suits their  
 “ own purposes. A skilful mechanic is a rare being  
 “ among them ; for no foreign artist is allowed to  
 “ be countenanced. Any fellow who has brains  
 “ enough, to know a jack-plane from a grind-  
 “ stone, may open a shop and become a master  
 “ carpenter, and employ a number of journeymen,  
 “ to do his work, out of whose wages he has the  
 “ good nature, to deduct one shilling daily. There  
 “ you may see *Divines* without learning ; *Physicians*  
 “ without feeling ; *Judges* without integrity ; *Law-*  
 “ *yers* without wit ; and *Jurors* without common  
 “ sense. Every breath they draw is contaminated :  
 “ every movement they make is vulgar ; and every  
 “ look from them is poisonous.” I was astonished  
 at the boldness of the creature in expressing such  
 opinions. They marked, to me, an imbecility of  
 mind, more deserving of pity, than meriting of

reproof. I briefly adverted to his remarks, not with a view of answering him, but of escaping, if possible, the imputation of incivility. My feelings were outraged, but I had too despicable an opinion of the object, to express them. The creature seemed to understand me, as disapproving of his conduct, and apparently felt a sorrow, at having expressed himself so freely. He was one of the many objects of my uniform detestation, through the various changes of my prison life. Prejudice, with respect to country, has (thank heaven) no *undue* influence upon me ; and my soul revolts at the idea of its influence, upon my rational being. Ignorance is the parent of prejudice, and is productive of almost every evil, existing in the world.

The convicts agree, in opinion, but on very few subjects : they, cordially, unite in hating their prosecutors, Judges, Jurors, their own Counsel, and the Officers of the law, into whose custody they are committed. During my unfortunate and lamented acquaintance with them, and my ample opportunity of studying their characters and feelings, I never knew a single convict, who thoroughly approved of his accusation, trial, conviction and imprisonment, *on the score of its morality*. Debased and profligate in the extreme, the most salutary measure of virtue, suppressive of vice, receives from them the heartiest and most pointed execration. Festering with crime, and with a worse than Cimmerian darkness

pervading their minds, they seek only a restoration to liberty, and that too upon almost any terms, which, even temporarily, will remove the restraint from their actions. It is never on the ground of being *reformed* or *better* men, that they claim the sympathy of the public, and the clemency of the law :— it is not, that their intentions are brighter in purity, than they were at the very first moment of their imprisonment ; nor is it that their actions, after their liberation, will be more in accordance with the principles of morality, or agreeable to the spirit of human law. O ! no ; these are but secondary considerations. A restoration to liberty is all their seeking. It is the thought of their waking and their sleeping moments ; the source of all their anxiety, all their trouble, all their grief. Without one idea of the care awaiting them, at the very gates of the prison, and perhaps, to continue with them, during their entire lives, they prose over the misery of their sorry situations, and ascribe their infelicity, past, present, and to come, to the mere deprivation and want of their liberty :—a liberty, which when restored to them, is oftener, assuredly, a *curse* than a *blessing*.

But, what is the situation of every convict, upon being liberated ? Though his heart be as pure as the dew of heaven yet unfallen, yet the gaze of suspicion is, immoveably, fixed upon him. The very circle which contains all his sympathies and his af-

fections, is destitute of sociality, of pleasure and consolation. In the very home of his father, he finds himself an alien. His relatives regard him with indifference and contempt; his brothers and his sisters glow no longer with affection; and all of them despise him, as the stigmatizer of the family. However virtuous may be his principles, and industrious his habits, he can find no employment wherever he is known. His very relatives, his parents, his brothers distrust him, and how can he expect that a stranger will accredit him?—He sees himself actually degraded and despised;—without money—without employment—without friends. Does he ask for pity?—none extend it to him. Does he ask forgiveness, in charity, for the past?—not a feeling bosom aspirates a pardoning response. Does he give an assurance of propriety in the future?—even that is sneered at with immoveable disbelief.—Wherever he goes, the finger of scorn points him out. The inhuman deride him, and snicker at his misfortunes. The unfeeling calumniate him, and are not sparing in their invectives. The world is vocal with his infamy—he has no hour of peace. Has he a wife, she is inconstant, or despises him. Has he children, they scorn to call him, Father. Had he a home, it is now a lonely ruin. “God help the “poor man when affliction comes upon him!” His consolation is scanty—his grief more than plentiful.

## INTERNAL PUNISHMENTS.

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Cheat thy neighbour ; fleece him and fear not ;  
For thou art sunk so deep in hell for this,  
There is no crime in vice's calendar  
Can sink thee deeper.

Colman.

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There are several kinds of punishment inflicted in this prison, for very trifling and petty offences. The idea of seeing a poor fellow creature chained to the floor, on his back, for several days together, and kept upon barely *bread* and *water*, in a lone and solitary cell ;—with his handcuffs binding his wrists, almost to a breaking of the bone—his neck-yoke deeply fringed with the fretted skin of his throat—and that too, merely on account of two or three *inches* of twisted tobacco, has something in it, to a sensitive mind, of the most dreadful horror. But when we see that poor, emaciated, iron-galled fellow creature, emerging, with a staggering gait,

from the Dionysian dome of his punishment, and pacing, in anguish, to meet death a few hours after, in the Hospital of the institution, we restrain not our mingled feelings of compassion and indignation; we forget the foibles and vices of the convict, remember that he is human, and feel for his sufferings, the warmest sympathy. We execrate the monster inflicting such a punishment, and exclaim in the bitterness of high-wrought indignation,

“ O! for a whip, in every honest hand,  
“ To lash the rascal *naked* thro’ the world.”

Besides the Solitary Cells, the following punishments are in vogue, viz—Sunday Cell, block and chain and bread and water. They deserve description. The Sunday Cell has hitherto been used, as a place of temporary punishment, in the immediate custody the Principal Keeper, and neither enquired nor known about by the Inspectors, except in extraordinary cases of offence. It is about five feet in height, and three and a half feet square; and has no ventilator, excepting the aperture, which use or decay has, charitably, made at the foot of the door. A man of ordinary stature, can neither stand erect, nor lie down in it; and the reader will judge, how six men could be situated, snugly handcuffed, without bread or water, for two or three days together, during the heat of summer, in the brutal caprice of the Principal Keeper. Instances

have not unfrequently been known, of convicts being kept here, for more than ten days together, without the visitation, or, perhaps, even the *knowledge* of the Inspectors. Blocks and chains are sometimes more than fashionable among the convicts. Smoking; having a few inches of tobacco; giving provisions to a poor suffering creature upon bread and water; looking at a petty Keeper, *as he thinks*, impudently; and such great *minor* crimes, are punishable and punished, with blocks and chains. Bread and water, is so trifling a punishment, that it is not in the knowledge of the Inspectors, or is beneath their attention, and is scarcely heeded by the convicts. In every case of punishment, bread and water is the only diet. But there is yet one punishment unnamed; and, horrible as it may seem, it is a source of great mirth, to many at its sorry infliction. It is to *corporal* punishment, by whipping, that I allude. Many a poor man's lacerated back, has paid for the beastly excesses, of the drunken vagabond who flogged him; whilst a party, from the city, of the Keepers' and Inspectors' friends, in the revelry of their brandy and water, forgot they were human, and laughed, heartily, at the would-be-receding back of the convict, under the torture of the lash. The miserable convict, often has been and, perhaps, often again will be, a source of merriment to such unfeeling creatures, with the semblance of manhood, without any of its properties;

but, would it not be more congenial with the object of the law, authorizing that punishment, that there should be some *substantial* internal crime, proved against the convict, injurious to the institution, and wantonly and wickedly committed by him, before the inflicting of such a brutally excoriating punishment upon him, and the drawing of Two or Three dollars from the coffers of the state, to pay the vagabond who flogs him?—Deficiency of work, is a prominent crime, for this kind of punishment, as well as all the others. I have known a convict to be flogged for weaving, (and he a very indifferent weaver too,) Three yards of cloth per day, from yarn, so wretchedly bad, that the best weaver in the expanded universe, could not weave from it Five yards of cloth, if he even had the blushless impudence, to weave it up at all. And so strongly convinced were the Keepers and Superintendent of the weaving, of this fact, that after the man who beamed the yarn (Gritman) had been punished with the cells, the convict above alluded to (Cutler) flogged, and a third one (name forgotten) put and kept upon bread and water for many successive days, and all for the same crime (deficiency of work) the warp was ordered to be cut, and the yarn stripped from the beam, as entirely, unfit for use. This is not the only case, barbarous in its nature, that has doubtless occurred; but there is no remedy for any barbarity, but by extracting the lash from the

hand of the tyrant. *Unbounded power, given to any man or body of men, with the mighty shield of the law, always HAS BEEN, and always WILL BE, abused.*

Punishments are often inflicted, to gratify the malevolence of a drunken, and conceitedly impudent cur, of an underling. As there is nothing so credulous, so there is nothing so brutally jealous and revengeful, as an ignorant man. He sees every thing in a distracted light : he looks at every thing with a jaundiced vision. As if conscious of his own nothingness, he thinks every eye is upon him, and ridiculing his impotency, and every manly soul viewing him, with his merited contempt. Passion burns within him—he feels his power—he determines to exert ; and the sequel is often, that a convict, although perfectly guiltless of any thing but denying him, occularly, his wished-for consequence, is dragged before the Principal Keeper and punished, or menaced with punishment, for disrespect to his potent Assistant. I had nearly been involved, in this kind of unpleasantness, the very second Sunday after my imprisonment. The church bell had tolled for matins : the convicts were repairing in obedience to the summons, from the refectory in which they had, from the breakfast hour, been locked : about one hundred and fifty were moving slowly on through the hall towards the door, and there was a great deal of crowding and jostling in passing through it. I stepped aside, to led the crowd

pass: but scarcely had I stood for five seconds, when the Hall Keeper, who was perched upon a bench to see the convicts retire, called to me by my *surname*, (for the instant that a man is declared guilty of crime, every *vagabond* is at liberty to treat him with *incivility*) in a tone that would have done no discredit to a Stentor, and commanded me to “*move on.*” My being so specially singled out for the display of his authority—the impossibility of my moving in the crowd, without much unpleasantness—and being wholly unaccustomed to the brutal voice of a tyrant, my bosom immediately swelled with an involuntary indignation. I unconsciously darted a look at the creature—he caught the glance—and (as if it had penetrated to the very core of his littleness) he disconcertedly vociferated, (in his very words) “*don't look at me sir, with those eyes again.*” I obeyed him, and passed on to the church. Another look, or a mere word, lisped by me, at the moment, would have produced my ultimate ruin;—and I should immediately have been doomed to the luxury of bread and water, to satisfy the monster, for my outrage to his consequence. For nearly Two years and a half, he never forgave the look that I unconsciously gave *him*; and it will easily be perceived, that I have not forgotten the brutal tyranny, which he shewed a wish, to exercise over *me*:

But, how says the reader, could another *look*, or

a mere *word*, have produced your ruin? Allow me to satisfy you. These creatures are confederated, not only in preserving the security and tranquillity of the prison, but in supporting the dignity and consequence of each other. A denial, or outrage, of the consequence of one, is a pointed and immediate offence, to the mighty consequence of all. The offender draws down upon him himself, their undivided vengeance. They embrace every opportunity of irritating and vexing him, until they plunge him into some torturing, though unmerited punishment. Once punished, otherwise than by bread and water, a poor convict, is immediately marked as a "vicious prisoner," and must be watched. Let him do what he will, he escapes not persecution; for a brutal spirit never sleeps, until its appetite is glutted. A trifle, magnified by the falsehood of a vagabond, may, in the lenity of a Principal Keeper, be punished merely, by bread and water. Another trifle, whilst a convict is under a bread and water punishment, may produce a block and chain. A third one, in short succession, will be esteemed an evidence of a turbulent spirit, and the solitary cells (with a pair of pinching handcuffs, screwed on by an indurated villian, with all his strength, amid the cries and groans of the convict, extended upon his back, and with, perhaps, the knee of the inflictor deeply sunk in his bosom,) will be necessarily the consequence. And thus, a convict may acquire

the reputation of utter incorrigibility, by the mere persecution of "drunkards, swearers, &c. &c.;" men, "not possessed of common morality." I have seen a Keeper endeavouring to irritate and vex a convict, quietly seated at his work, that he might have a *pretext*, for the infliction upon him of a punishment. If he looked at the Keeper, as he passed by him, through the shop, he was told to mind his work, and not be watching him (the Keeper,) in the most surly and galling tone. And if the convict attended closely to his labour, without noticing the Keeper, (determined to say something to him) he would find fault with his work,—threaten him with punishment—upbraid him with his crimes, and his general immorality—call him every name in the lexicon of infamy—injure him in feeling, and finally, irritate him; when, perhaps, in his pride of heart, he might lisp something to the Keeper, which villiany would *torture* into pointed disrespect. He would then be taken before the Principal Keeper for trial and punishment; and the fate of the convict, too often in such cases, depends upon the humour of the Judge. I once knew an instance of this kind, where in one day a Keeper took a convict before the Principal Keeper for punishment, *NINE* different times; an evidence, perhaps, of a persecuting spirit. But, was the convict punished? No! The futility of the charges, and the peculiar zeal manifested to have the convict punished, in-

duced the Principal Keeper, to overshoot the mark, of his common lenity, and to send the convict to his work. And, then, in my hearing, he reprehended the conduct of his Assistant, in the severest terms. But with respect to myself. Had I vented my feelings to the creature, he must certainly have been offended. I would have committed treason against his consequence, and, upon his bare assertion, I should have been punished. Once punished *for such a crime*, (a wound to the tender feelings of an unlettered, a pride-bloated, a human brute) there would have been no cessation to it. Every Keeper would have hurled upon me the crushing shield of misery, and I should have run the gantlet, through the punishments of the prison. If the Almighty had preserved me in life, I would have been esteemed a hardened and desperate villian, undeserving of the executive clemency, or the sympathy of a virtuous man. Desperation would have been marked against me, in the very books of the prison; and I would linger through a Seven years sentence, as many have *in the same manner* been before compelled to do; and, broken down by disease, and wasted to a skeleton, I should, finally, be discharged, with the unmerited character, and odious appellation of an execrable villian.

I never was punished in any way, manner or shape, for any offence *actually* committed by me, against the internal regulations of the prison. When

imprisoned, I had never, but once, seen a loom in my life, and then it was not in operation. I had no trade. Without any mechanical skill, and with a visible *cecily*, I was placed upon a loom, to be transformed into a weaver. My reputation of having been a practising Lawyer, rendered me an object of peculiar curiosity, as well of distinguished persecution. The Keepers regarded me as one who might acquire a respect among the convicts, incompatible with that degradation, to which they would willingly consign me, and they resolved to prevent it. The Convicts were unacquainted with me, but from the representations of the Keepers; and I had never seen, of about Six hundred and thirty convicts and Twenty officers, but one of them in my life. Thus situated—shut out from my relatives and acquaintance—placed among a set of determined villians—without a trade or any mechanical skill, in a dome where nothing but mechanism was observable, I was put upon a loom in the Factory of weaving. Every eye was upon me *within*, and many curious ones intruded from *without*. I was pointed out to the visitors, by the secretly gratified Keepers, as though I had been a tyger in a menagerie of wild beasts. Every opportunity was seized, by them, to wound my agonized feelings. The convicts chuckled and sneered at my awkwardness, without offering to do any thing, but to perplex, to torture me, and to entangle my

work. The first fortnight of my incarceration had scarcely elapsed, when my work was measured, an estimate was made of my earnings, and for insufficiency of labour, I was taken before the Principal Keeper, for trial. Poreblind as I was, and unaccustomed to labour, I had woven *Three* yards of cloth upon an average per day—as much as is generally expected in the prison from a *new* hand ; but, that quantity was insufficient, to satisfy a creature, who felt disposed to punish me. I was to be esteemed an extraordinary man—and extraordinary things were, from me, to be exacted. In aggravation, the Superintendent told the Head Keeper, that I had *refused* to work : a gross and malicious lie. Three raps upon a snuff box formed the prelude to my sentence—“ try bread and water ; and “ if that wont do, we’ll try a pair of handcuffs and the cells.” I was placed upon bread and water, and so kept for twelve entire days, at a time when I was labouring under a chronic disease, that had debilitated my frame, and, coupled with the horrors of my immediate adversity, had produced a distracted enervation of mind, in the immediate knowledge of all who were around me. I had every thing to corrode me, and aggravate my grief. An *unknown* persecution *without*, and an *unmerited* persecution *within* ; and in the den of Cacus, I was, as it were, to be consoled with the fare of a pound of filthy rye bread, and the liberty of drinking as much water

as I pleased; and this too, to gratify a false, ungenerous and brutal spirit, without sensibility, without reason, without remorse. Twelve days of punishment, satisfied for a moment my persecutors, and I was relieved from my *special* diet. But here, although persecution paused, yet it never lost sight of me. It followed me where I went, and lingered where I reposed. The Keeper, openly avowed a wish and determination to punish me, and the convict, emboldened by the inhumanity of the Keeper, pursued me still the closer. It was, says Hierocles, a common saying among the heathens, that "the wise man *hates* nobody, but only *loves* the virtuous." But I was unable, towards either Keeper or convict, to practice such feelings. I actually *hated* them both: the convict for being a desperate and abandoned villian, and the Keeper for his blushless and unnatural inhumanity. They watched me, and I never lost sight of them. But all their efforts were vain. Although I was upwards of Three years afterwards confined, yet they never had the pleasing opportunity of punishing me again, nor of finding a pretext to do so; and we all parted, as we had lived, Keeper, Convict and myself, determined enemies.

A punishment, when it is necessary, should not be extravagant, for a petty offence; nor should it be inflicted upon a convict, with the least semblance of anger. The groan of agony should not be ex-

tracted from his heart, as I have frequently known it to be, by the screwing of a pair of handcuffs upon him, too small for his wrists, with all the might and strength of a brutal and unfeeling hand, on account of an unavoidable deficiency of work—of not performing an oppressive and extravagant task. I esteem it a horrible brutality—and more especially, when it is suggested by an irascible temper. I have known convicts, who were charged with crimes, which they denied, and which they persisted in denying, to be kept in the Sunday Cell, for many days together, in order to extort from them a confession of guilt; and I have known convicts, who were *innocent*, to confess themselves *guilty*, in order to be transferred to the Solitary Cells, which, by many, is regarded as a much lesser punishment. This reminds me of the celebrated Nabis, the tyrant of Sparta, who invented a machine in the form of his wife, the arms, breast and hands of which were full of iron pegs. If any one refused to give the tyrant his money, he was introduced into the machine, and, by means of a spring, the iron pegs stuck into him. To rid himself of the torture, a man would grant, readily, the tyrant's request. Just so would a man handcuffed, unable to extend himself, and with every bone in his body aching, from its unnatural contraction, confess himself guilty of any thing, to be relieved from his immediate punishment, in the Sunday Cell of the New-York State Prison.

When a man is tortured, merely, to please another, and not because he deserves it; or when he is punished for some very trifling offence, so trifling, that reason blushes when it is named, what feeling can it create, but that, of the most desperate revenge?—A spirit that should be tranquillized in the breast of the convict, to ensure *that* reformation, contemplated by our law. It is not by harrowing up the feelings of our nature, and irritating and vexing us, that a placidity of temper, and evenness of deportment, are to be engrafted upon us. Reason and passion are not inhabitants of the same mansion; and when we awaken the latter from its slumber, it is but to give the lightning's celerity to the former. A convict should be aroused to a sense of his crimes, and of his sorry situation, by reason, calmness and persuasion; calculated to mollify the induration, and smooth the roughness of his heart, and to lead him to the undying admiration of virtue. This desirable purpose is not to be attained, by the using of harsh and unreasonable measures, generative of revenge, and its multiplying train of malignant passions, so difficult to be silenced, when once brought into action, and so eminently productive of much more desperate guilt.

The human being who is destitute, entirely, of shame, is an unfit object for philanthropic experiment; for *shame* is, emphatically, the ground-work of reformation. A man must be *ashamed* of his

vices, before he can feel on their account, an actual sorrow and contrition. *Reason* him into a conviction of his error, and shame and contrition most naturally succeed. But try to *coerce* him into such a knowledge or contrition, and your efforts but produce an improvident re-action. No man is pleased when upbraided with his crimes, or reproached on account of his follies ; and it is natural for him to believe such upbraiding or reproaching, as coming from an enemy, rather than from a friend.—Punishments inflicted with an “iron hand” upon the convicts, awaken a spirit of revenge which the human breast retains in perpetuity : a spirit that actuates every fibre of the convict, and directs his thought to every thing unmanly, vicious and intolerant :—a spirit, that baffles all the glorious purposes of philanthropy in the establishing of a house of correction, and which (instead of tranquillizing the heart of the convict, and allaying his already heated passions,) creates a train of *sanguine* reflections, destroying every hope of an ultimate reformation.

Let the work of reformation be commenced in the convict, in the warmest spirit of humanity, and in all the sanctity of a disinterested friendship, by those to whom it is entrusted at his first committal to the prison. Convince him that your sympathies, are identified with his own ; that you are, emphatically, his friend, through whom he may look, with *certainty*, for the restoration of his liberty ; keep

his mind employed on subjects calculated to inspire him with virtuous and elevated thoughts, which habit will make familiar, and time render pleasing ; keep afar from his mind, the remotest idea of extravagant punishments, for petty internal offences, inflicted by your direction, which are calculated to destroy his confidence in you, and to originate that perpetual spirit of revenge, so destructive of the work ; and, *if there is a possibility, under the present disciplinary system*, of attaining the professed objects of the prison, I am inclined to anticipate the happiest result.

## CRIMES.

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Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,  
As to be hated, needs but to be seen ;  
Yet seen too oft, familiar to her face,  
We first *endure*, then *pity*, then *embrace*.

Pope.

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IN general, about six hundred persons, convicted of *trifling*, as well as *aggravated* offences, are huddled together in this sink of corruption, under a variety of sentences, and without the least *effective* discrimination or distinction. The *Bigamist* is made the companion of the *Highwayman* ; the petty *Thief* is put upon a level with the most desperate *Murderer* ; and each has a chum, without reference to depravity, in the wisdom and sagacity of the Keeper who kennels him. This is the furtherance of that wise policy, which places the most *trifling* imprudence, on the same footing as the most *heinous*

crime ;—the young *Thief* on a level with the hoary *Murderer*. That policy, which has converted a Dome of Penitence, into a College of Crime ; and that policy, which has converted the pardon of the Executive, into a Collegiate diploma, evincive of the competency and proficiency of its possessor.

Criminality attaches itself to many, from their downright *ignorance* ; to some, from *imprudence* and inattention ; and to others, from *falsehood*, corruption and art. Many a creature has been sent to the State Prison, for “having Counterfeit Money “in his possession, with an intent to pass it,” whose very *ignorance* and clownish simplicity, and not actual turpitude, produced the confirmation of perfidy and guilt ; as was the case, perhaps, with Hibbard, the man who was several months in solitude, from the mere misprision of the Clerk of the County where he was convicted. Many have been convicted of the crime of *Rape*, by *quibbling* and *perjury*, whose very age should have excused them, before a Jury of enlightened men ; as was the case with Kidney, a little boy of fifteen years of age, quite backward in growth, convicted of an *actual* Rape upon a *full grown* woman, who was, after his conviction, proved, by her own parent, to have been married, and to have had two children then living ; and also with *Schenck*, a black boy, thirteen years old, only Four feet one inch in stature, and very puny, convicted of an *attempt* to commit a Rape upon a little Girl of

about the same age. He died in the prison.—The same evidence, in some cases of merely petit Larceny, would convict the culprit under a *different* indictment of Highway Robbery ; as is proved by the case of Quick, a boy, who met another boy in the Country road, near the place where they both resided, (I believe) knocked him down, and took away from him “a penknife of iron and steel”—value one shilling. He was a very wild, thoughtless and mischievous boy ; and had become a source of great annoyance, to many, in the neighbourhood of his home. His friends were very poor ; and *poverty* sometimes is a *crime*. He died in the prison after a long confinement, of debility, occasioned by punishment and starvation.—The case of Jackson, a sort of a crazy fellow, who thrust his fist through a window, and took a small bundle of Jews-harps, upon one of which he stood playing when the store keeper caught him, and that too immediately after the crime was committed, and almost on his very premises ; and that of Bateman, a black, convicted of breaking into a bar-room, and stealing a pint of brandy : are cases of petit Larceny, which have been *strained* into Burglary, to fit TWENTY-FIVE dollars, of the public money, to the craving pockets of *each* of the District Attornies prosecuting them. Had they both been convicted of petit Larceny, and sentenced to the prisons of the respective Counties in which they were convicted, perhaps public

justice would have been equally advanced, and their punishments have been amply commensurate with their crimes.

Crime is constituted by the intentional outraging of some or one of those principles of morality, upon which the tranquility, safety and prosperity of society, entirely depend ; the *intention* being inferred, from the act of the party accused. It is not the mere infringement of a moral precept, that gives to crime its horror ; it is the evil example that it sets to others, which too often produces a repetition of the offence. Many a creature in-existence is perfectly unacquainted with a crime, until he hears of its perpetration. The instance of one man's perfidy, serves as a sort of lesson of vice to another ; and crime is often generated by the very breathing of its prohibition. The curiosity of the *man* is awakened. Your cunning suggests law ; his cunning devises plans to evade it. Until he is prohibited, he has no wish, no desire to attempt the infringement of any article of our criminal code. It reminds me of the hoary subject of the Emperor of China, who had attained the age of Ninety Years, and had never been without the walls of his native city. The Emperor heard of it, and prohibited him from going without, during his life time, under the penalty of death. The aged man was informed of the imperial mandate, and his curiosity was instantly awakened. He now, for the first

time in his life, had a desire to pass without the walls ; but the realization of his wishes was impossible, and he died shortly after, of actual grief. But law is necessary to the very being of society, and deserves, when well administered, the approbation of every virtuous man.

Crime should be well ascertained, and not merely inferred from trifling circumstances, of the intent of the party accused. We all know how easy it is to be confirmed of the truth of the grossest error, by a series of concatenated circumstances. Suspicion generates curiosity ; curiosity gathers every pertinent circumstance ; logic links those circumstances together ; and credulity soon passes from suspicion to guilt. Thus often the guilt of an accused man is determined. The matter of accusation is talked over in the stews of the tavern—report yields not its right of augmenting, aggravating and colouring the circumstances of accusation—the mind of the hearer, in some degree, is made up on the subject *instantly*—and the accused is prejudged, and very often convicted, in the minds of his jurors, long before he is put upon his trial. With some men, the mere circumstance of being accused, affords a striking and conclusive evidence of guilt ; whilst with others, somewhat more liberal, there remains a bare possibility of one's innocence.

“ Tho’ all is innocence within,

“ ’Tis guilt to wear the garb of sin.”

Under the present penitentiary system, many a man has been convicted, and has suffered a lengthy imprisonment, for a crime, which his heart detested, and of which he was perfectly innocent. We are accustomed to affix too small a value to the *liberty* of a fellow creature. His *life* when jeopardized, interests our very souls. Sympathy pours around him her consolatory dew; and fain would Pity wash, with her soul reviving tear, the crime from our remembrance, that would doom him to the scaffold. The agonies of a death, inflicted by a human hand—the last convulsive struggle, of the sufferer, for existence—the horrors of an ignominious death, in the presence of a gaping multitude, for some venial offence, are so eminently calculated to rivet our feelings, that we should tax our hearts with ferocity, were we to undervalue life. Liberty, by mortals, may be restored:—life never can. Jurors when deliberating upon their verdict sometimes argue this way with themselves: if the accused man is *innocent*, a short imprisonment will do him no harm; and if he is *guilty*, it would be injustice, to the community, to let him go unpunished. Such reflections often characterize Jurors in criminal issues, and are too frequently prejudicial to an accused man's liberty. There have been some few instances of innocence clearly proved, after the most aggravating imprisonments, in the New-York State Prison; and, there would, perhaps, be many

more, were there not every thing, in inhumanity, to discourage the attempt. Emerging, as a convict does, from this prison of shame, he sees every eye upon him, kindling with contempt and derision. His protestations of his innocence, are sneered at and disregarded; he complains of injustice, but none will hearken to him. Does he importune his former friends?—they are afraid of the world's censure. Does he tell a stranger his sorrows?—he is deemed deserving them. Does he persist in his innocence?—it is construed into audacity. Society, willing to “pin its faith upon the sleeves” of a few of its members, will allow itself no opinion, where those members have once decided. Thus situated, is it not really wonderful, that a case of *punished* innocence, has ever transpired?—But some few are extant, which (besides the case of M'Fall, pardoned in December, 1822, by his Excellency, on account of his innocence) seem to be hung out, by the hand of the Almighty, as beacons to jurors, at once to warn and to direct them; and every prudent, every humane, every sensible man will regard them, with the warmest—the most heart-felt, sympathy.

Crime operates variously upon the minds of those perpetrating it. Its younger votaries are in a continual and feverish fear of detection; they have no repose, no quiet, no felicity. The rustling of a leaf, or the noise of a speedy footstep, immediately startles them, to a remembrance of their crimes.

They look, upon all around them, with the utmost suspicion ; and the glance of a casual eye, entirely, disconcerts them. One successful depredation, leads them quickly to another—crime succeeds crime, and guilt follows—until they sink from the most venial impropriety, to the deepest and blackest turpitude. If there is a mediety in the progress of crime, it is when blackened by repeated depredation—when virtue is yielding her last convulsive gasp, and conscience is upbraiding him—that contrition draws from the votary of vice, the fervent sigh for his former purity, and the wish for his former innocence and worth. Then he is still reclaimable. He has not yet passed the rubicon of perfidy ; and a hope still remains of his usefulness to society. There is such a moment in the life of every bad man ; and well would it be, if that moment could witness, his mutation from guilt, to unvarying rectitude. On the mind of the *hardened* desperado, crime has no imposing horror, but what is produced by a deprecated detection, and a consequent punishment. A fellow who has served an apprenticeship to vice, and whose whole life, from almost his infancy, has been a tissue of nothing but the blackest depravity, views crime as the actual, nay, *only* means, of administering to his wants. He has no remorse—no shame—no pity. With no god, but selfishness, he scruples not to trample upon all that is sacred, and to profane all that is holy.

The widow's want and the orphan's helplessness, have no audience from his mercy. He calculates upon the stealing of a man's pocket book, or the breaking of a man's store, with as much actual certainty, as upon the rising of the morning sun. His mind is prepared for detection; and when it takes place, he is calm and unruffled as a summer wave, when not a zephyr breathes. Trace him through the intricacies of a legal investigation; see him under sentence in his merited place of punishment, and observe his shameless and unheeding composure. Law has no restraint upon him; he sets it at defiance. Imprisonment has no terror, it but fits him for deeper guilt. Reformation is hopeless; he scoffs at the idea.

From my infancy, up to the time of my imprisonment in this prison, I never had been knowingly the companion of a felon. My education had taught me to view crime, through the prism of virtue, as an object for uniform detestation, and its votaries for marked abhorrence. I was young and inexperienced; but I had invariably regarded the incumbents of the prison, as the most desperate outcasts breathing in the world. I knew none of them; but, with the virtuous, I hated them on account of their crimes. When one of them was pointed out to me, I regarded him as a villian, who had a hidden design upon me, and involuntarily prayed my God to preserve me from his hands. With such convic-

tions and impressions, what must have been my feelings, when the massy door, of a State Prison Cell, cracked upon its hinges to receive me? What must have been my feelings, when robed in infamy, I saw myself degraded to the level of the most desperate and depraved, who seemed to draw consolation to themselves, from my very wretchedness? Shut out in one instant from every thing sacred, every thing sympathetic, every thing dear—without a virtuous friend to comfort, or a pious bosom to cheer me—what must have been my feelings?—There were ELEVEN convicts in the room in which I was placed. It was twilight, and a dull lamp threw its glimmer over the dreary seclusion, as it stood upon a greasy table, around which three or four of the convicts sat, in close conversation. The remainder, were promiscuously seated around the room; some upon straw beds, lying on the floor, and others upon the bare planks. I viewed them all with a sort of horror, and not entirely without affright. Silence was preserved for a considerable time. They saw fright and austerity in me—I saw villianny and desperation in them. One of them, at length addressed me, and invited me to sit down upon a bench, which he politely handed, and I accordingly did so. After interchanging a few common place civilities, he enquired, of me, the period of my sentence. I told him SEVEN years. "O!" replied he, "that's a trifle; my sentence is for

life." Life! thought I; and so much unconcern, and so much levity, and so much composure? "What may have been your crime?" said he; "Forgery," I replied. "In return," said he, "I must inform you, that they charged me with Highway Robbery." Highway Robbery! said I, as a thousand horrors shot across my mind, and my eyes, surcharged with tears, unconsciously, became fixed upon him; Highway Robbery? "Yes," replied he, "the most *manly* crime in the prison." I shuddered at the thought of it; my heart sickened within me; I withdrew from my seat, and paced the floor, reflecting upon my shocking situation. After a little while, my bed was shewn me, by one whom I subsequently found to be my bed fellow. It was of filthy straw, worn nearly as fine as bran, lying in one corner of the room. I sat down upon it, and was, by no means, disposed to be sociable. My bed mate seated himself beside me, and asked me numberless questions, which civility compelled me to answer. He knew my crime and sentence, and, unasked, he informed me of his own. "It was," said he, without blushing, and without shame, "it was *Perjury*." "A shocking crime, indeed," said I; "so it is," rejoined he, "but I am innocent—I swore the truth." Then, "I replied" "you are very unfortunate; public justice does not require the punishment of any *innocent* man." "You may remember my case sir," said he; "I

“ was charged, with Sickler, with the murder of Sally Hamilton; I turned State’s Evidence, and swore to the murder against Sickler. He proved an *alibi*, and was acquitted. I was convicted of Perjury, for that swearing, and here I am.” Good God! at this moment, if my heart strings had been severed, my anguish of feeling could not have been more complete. This capped the climax. But yesterday, as it were, I had been the associate of the most respectable in society; now, I beheld myself the secluded companion of the Highwayman, and the bed fellow of a Murderer, who had testified to his own guilt: the one boasting of the *manliness* of his crime, the other priding himself on his *innocence*, although, that very innocence, if proved, made him deserving of a gibbet. All my days of fleeting felicity, rose in animation before me. My hopes—my prospects—my every wish, now blighted by crime, shot across my fevered fancy. My situation seemed that of a fargone and irremediable wretchedness. The scathing of ingratitude, still agonized my feelings; a train of undying, sorrow, in the prospect, pursued fortunes; and a sort of involuntary despair, filled my very soul, when “the drum beat the hour for retiring” to rest. I threw myself backward upon my bed, but not to close my eyes. My limbs were in a state of the utmost langour, but my tortured bosom was bloated too much with a tearless and suspiring grief, to allow me

one instant of balmy sleep. I lay reflecting during the night; and a morning never dawned to my vision, that gave me, at its appearance, such refined delight, as that one succeeding the first night of my incarceration. It was like the beaming of the glorious light of truth, after ages of the sablest intellectual error. It was Sunday morning. The atmosphere was lucid; and the angel of transparency seemed waiting upon the morn. An unusual serenity pervaded the waters, that intervened between the shores of the Jerseys, and my doleful, dreary dome. Emerged from my sequestered room, I was introduced into a spacious hall, where four fifths of the convicts, eat their daily meals. Here were to be seen, people from almost every clime and country: Spaniards, Frenchmen, Italians, Portuguese, Germans, Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen, Swedes, Danes, Africans, West-Indians, Brazilians, several Northern Indians, and many claiming to be citizens, born in the U. States. After a breakfast provided at our emission from our rooms, we were allowed to intermix, and a great number of the convicts huddled about me, for the purpose of hearing the news. Their curiosity, though extremely impertinent, was greatly excusable. They had been accustomed to review every new convict, at his coming among them, and to ask him a thousand questions about the world, from which many of them had, for a length of time, been entirely

secluded. I became speedily apprised of the fact, and, however irritating it was at first, I soon consented to make their impertinence tolerable. They here intermixed, according to inclination, and conversed, unrestrainedly, upon any topic suited to their minds. The hoary veteran here imparted his feelings to the novice in crime, and instructed him where a deficiency in knowledge was apparent. It is here that those, who, during the week, are particularly separated, find an opportunity to converse, and to interchange their feelings and reflections. A confabulation of the most wretched depravity, here becomes the preparation of the mind, for the solemnity of divine service, which statedly commences at ten, and at two o'clock on the sabbath, when every convict is compelled to attend. Sometimes a wrestling match, or a vulgar and obscene song, or some species of petty gambling, beguiles the dull hours of Sunday, (church time excepted) with some of the convicts. and serves to divert the tide of their thoughts, from their sorry situations. Better indeed would it be, that they could realize the horrors of their adversity, and never meet together but to serve the cause of virtue, and to teach one to another, the beauties of revealed truth. Better, that they had suspired their last breath, upon the gallows or the gibbet. than that the hour, which should have wakened them to a sense of their desperate wickedness, should only have beheld them

profaning the Lord's Sabbath, and mocking at religion. Better that they had never, never been, than that very action of their lives should be tinged with turpitude and crime, and every thought be prolific, in nothing but loathsome guilt.

In my general range of observation, I particularly remarked, the vast number of convicts, who made their *debut* in guilt, by passing Counterfeit money. It is, certainly, a subject calculated to fix the attention of every thinking being. There are so many inducements held out to the poverty-stricken man, to pass it, and thereby to administer to his necessities; there are so many cases where a Counterfeit Bill comes (by imposition, and villianny) into the possession of a man, whose penury will not permit him to lose its value, and whose duty to his needy family is paramount to his virtue; and there is something so very alluring in the prospect of gain, that it requires, in many cases the self-denial of a Stoic, to resist its fascinations. Like the song of the Syren, it captivates the senses, to deal, in the sequel, death and ruin to the heart.

Counterfeit money, is called, among *Sharpers*, by the slang name of *COGNIA*C.—Those passing it, may, perhaps, be divided into two classes :—*Experienced rogues*, and *perfect novices* in guilt. The first, either pursue it, entirely, for a living, or resort to it occasionally, to relieve their temporary wants.—Nothing is more common, than to find a fellow, whose

fingers are itching to be in every man's pocket, when he has been a little unsuccessful at *Thieving*, passing *Cogniac* to defray his expences. But he considers it so much more dangerous than his usual vocation, that he immediately abandons it when he makes, as he terms it, a *raise*, (meaning perhaps a profitable *theft*,) in his ordinary way of business. Those, however, who pursue it, entirely, for a living, have their agents and sub-agents, in almost all directions. In the City of New-York, there are sixteen wholesale dealers, pursuing different occupations, who have steady customers, to whom they sell, at a regular per centage, their *imported Cogniac*; and who have already made, and still continue to make, by the horrid trade, vast sums of money. Some of them have a regular chain of communication, extending directly through the most populous parts of the State of New-York, and onward to the Canadian line; by means of which, they are enabled to calculate, to a certainty, upon the receipt of a *bundle* or *bootle*, (as a package of Counterfeit money is termed) at a regularly specified time. They sell to persons, who retail it in small quantities to others: they neither *retail* nor *pass* it themselves. It is through these creatures, that such copious emissions, of Counterfeit money, are set afloat in the world, serving, at once, to deceive the most wary, and to involve the innocent and the ignorant, in irremediable ruin. Pity is it indeed that the glove of justice can-

not reach the evil. That instead of merely lopping or withering the *branches*, those who pass it, that it cannot entirely cut off and destroy the *root*, those who procure it to be made, and who unblushingly aggrandize themselves, at the expense of virtue, and by the prostitution of every feeling, ennobling to humanity. Those whom I have denominated perfect *novices* in guilt, may be deemed such as have either *casually*, in the way of business, or by the pressing of necessity and by the seduction of others, become possessed of Counterfeit money. There are many of this class in the prison. They were all poor—many of them with families—most of them with children—a great portion of them unable to provide for their support—and many of them retaining, even in their loathsome and corrupting solitude, the utmost detestation of crime ;—men, who would sooner think of committing a suicide, than perpetrating a Larceny. Although there is nothing that can *justify* an improper action, yet there are often circumstances that tend, greatly, to *mitigate* its enormity ;—circumstances that compel us to *commiserate*, where we cannot *approve*. The man whose little children are crying around him for bread, which he is unable to give them ; whose industry is insufficient to provide necessaries for his family ; and whose heart is agonized to desperation, by the pressure of unavoidable poverty, has a claim to the warmest feelings of our sympathy, when vice acquires an

ascendancy over his virtue. We may detest the crime that has shaded his integrity, but the motives which produced it, plead for pity in our hearts. We turn our eyes, in tenderness, to the home of blighted virtue, and sympathise with the crime-created widow and the infant.—Many, many of such unfortunate and imbecile beings, are now in this prison;—men, who loathed, at their first incarceration, the very name of *Felony*, and yet, who, but a short time before, could find a justification, *in necessity*, for passing Counterfeit money. There is a plausibility and a speciousness attached to a well-executed Counterfeit Bill, that often gives it a currency, among the best of judges; and facilitates an imposition upon the unsuspecting and the unwary. The poor and the illiterate, are the sufferers, most commonly, by the wicked traffic: they can easily be imposed on, because they are inexperienced. These Counterfeit emissions are generally in bills of a small amount, from One to Ten Dollars,—and very rarely of a larger denomination. They are calculated—from the very parvity of their amounts, for the pockets of the poor man; his very poverty, and the smallness of his dealings, creating the almost immovable presumption, of his being wholly incapable, of discovering them to be spurious. The poor man, is made to batten upon the spoliated home of poverty; to impoverish and ruin the family of his equally poor neighbour. I

once asked an apparently *contrite* man in the prison, in what way he became introduced, *in the first instance*, to the wicked trade, which had involved his family and himself in ruin. He told me with the utmost frankness, while the tear of regret stood trembling in his eye, that he had been a very bad man to his family, "I was," said he, "about four years married—I had an affectionate and industrious wife, and three fine children—and we were respected. I had two acres of land, in a good state of cultivation—every thing smiled cheerfully around us, and we were all emphatically happy. At this time, I grew fond of bousing, and of being at the tavern. I would get drunk, and stay from home two or three days together, while my dear wife would be sobbing and sickening with anxiety, on account of my absence. Things daily grew worse with me. I resolved, a thousand times, to do better, and broke my resolutions. I got in debt—our furniture was seized and sold—my rent was unpaid—my landlord threatened to turn my family into the road—my neighbours laughed at our miserable situation—every thing went to ruin about us—and when it was too late, I strove to repair it. I left off drinking, and went to work for one of my neighbours—my children were often hungry, and I had nothing to give them—my wife grew sick. and so continued for several months. A neighbour of

“ours, stopped in, one day, to see us, and expressed  
“the deepest sorrow for our pitiable situation. He  
“called me out of the house, and handed me a  
“Two Dollar Bill, to get something for my fa-  
“mily. I thanked him, and he departed. His  
“visitation overwhelmed me with gratitude; I look-  
“ed at my anguished wife, and my foodless chil-  
“dren, and I saw a relief to their wants, in the  
“benefaction of my neighbour. I went, immediate-  
“ly, and procured some necessary things with the  
“Bill, and returned home. We were all grateful,  
“and blessed the sensibility, that had administered  
“to our wants. The gift was like manna, sent  
“express from heaven, to cheer, to console, to com-  
“fort and to nourish us. About a week afterwards  
“my neighbour called again. I was at work at a  
“neighbouring house. He gave my wife a Three  
“Dollar Bill, as she lay on her sick bed, and de-  
“parted. This Bill I passed away for necessaries  
“also, and we were, for a little while, comparative-  
“ly happy. About two months elapsed, before I  
“saw my neighbour. It was in the road—I thanked  
“him warmly for his kindness, and promised to  
“repay him. After asking me, if I had passed both  
“of the Bills, and being informed that I had, he  
“gave me to understand, to my entire astonish-  
“ment, that both of them were *Counterfeit*. At  
“first, it fell upon my soul, like coals of flame.  
“All the agony, the odiousness and the wickedness

“ of the crime, rose animated before me. I ex-  
“ crated in my heart, the man, who, under the sem-  
“ blance of friendship, had involved my ignorance  
“ in crime ; but *then*, that very guilt had relieved  
“ my poor wife, and my helpless children, in the  
“ writhing hour of want. This reflection, sunk  
“ deep in my bosom. I pondered upon it, and the  
“ crime became divested, essentially, of its horror.  
“ Successful in these unknown attempts, at crime,  
“ Poverty, soon after, urged a repetition of the  
“ offence. I accordingly sought, and in a short time,  
“ found means to procure, a small quantity of  
“ *Cogniac*, and bought some sheep with it, which I  
“ sold to great advantage. I then obtained some  
“ more to trade with. Things went on swimming-  
“ ly, for about four months with me, and I saw a  
“ prospect of renovating my sunken fortunes. It  
“ was a selfish and dishonest thought ; but a  
“ drowning man, will catch at a straw, even though  
“ he drowns the dependent family of his neighbour.  
“ Four months after I first commenced the odious  
“ trade, I was detected in passing a Five Dollar  
“ Bill ; a search of my person took place ; Nine-  
“ teen Dollars, in Counterfeit money, were found  
“ upon me ; I was tried and convicted, and here I  
“ am sentenced for the term of Nine Years. My  
“ poor wife, and my dear children, perhaps,  
“ are starving, and I have the melancholy reflection  
“ that my own imprudence, has been the cause of

"it."—The simplicity of the narration, the frankness of the convict, and the contrition, which seemed to fill his every thought, conspired to make me regard him as deserving of sympathy. I often, afterwards, lamented the poverty, that had opened an avenue to his heart, through which vice might wind itself, to the ruin of his virtue; and to the entire and remediless desolation of his family. And not unfrequently, have I execrated, when beholding objects like him, the monsters whose wicked devices and designs, so often devastate the home, and the fireside of domestic peace, and rob it of all that penury has left it, its "integrity to heaven," and its honesty to man. They are the fiends, who like Herostratus of old, steal the torch of desolation, into the fanum of purity, and blight and wither all its loveliness and worth. Fiends who feed upon the heart's blood of innocence and virtue; fiends, who seduce all that is lovely, that they surely may destroy it; and fiends who agonize the poverty-stricken widow, and her hunger-wasting babes, upon the wheel of sensibility, without a single feeling of pity or remorse.

"——O! is there not, some chosen curse,  
"Some hidden thunder in the stores of heav'n,  
"Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the *fiends*,  
"Who'd build their greatness on another's *wreck*?"

I, certainly, do believe, that there are many men in existence, who would as soon die, as perpetrate a

Larceny, or any other universally detested crime ; but whose morality might be bent to the purposes of their families, by the passing of spurious or Counterfeit money. I regard it as extremely improper to let such men mingle with abandoned, desperate and profligate vagabonds—with *Perjurers*—with *Highwaymen*—with midnight *Incendiaries*—and with vagrant *Thieves*—to wash away the primitive features of their virtue, in the corroding waters of the fountain of vice. The crimes of Bigamy, Manslaughter and several others, are of that peculiar cast of character, that they admit of much extenuation ; and I should be disposed to vituperate, as utterly impolitic, their unrestrained miscibility with those of deeper, and more uniformly acknowledged, depravity.—SOLITUDE, only, can prevent such evils : and it is the only imprisonment under the canopy of heaven, that can serve, at the same time, as a *punishment*, for the correction of crime, and for the *reformation* of the Criminal.

## SENTENCES.

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Were he my kinsman, brother or my son,  
It should be with him thus.

*Shakespeare.*

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There is a vast difference in the effect of calamities, upon the minds of different men. Some, they scathe and wound, never wholly to recover ; others, they barely sting, and leave behind them no impression. The effect, upon a Convict, of a sentence to imprisonment, must, essentially, depend upon the texture of his mind. Education may polish, and society may refine, but nature, primarily, must have touched him with the wand of sensibility, to make his soul alive, to the doleful pressure of calamity. I have remarked the effects of sentences, in a variety of instances, upon the educated, and upon the illiterate. With some men, there is a natural, though lamentable, incogitancy, which deprives them of a knowledge, entirely, of their situations.

Whatever unpleasant occurs to them, they are blessed with such a peculiar happiness of disposition, that it merely troubles them for a moment, and they can then sit themselves quietly down, under the utmost affliction, and scarcely, afterwards, have an instant, of actual uneasiness. I remember an instance of a young man in the prison, who had received a classical education, and who at the very time of his detection, was pursuing the study of medicine. He was, in appearance, "a blood" of the first water. Upon receiving his sentence, and for an hour or two after his State Prison matriculation, he seemed deeply affected, and, as many do, to excite sympathy, I believe, he wept aloud. He mingled with the convicts immediately, became familiar with them, and readily learned their habits; and from being, apparently, a decent young man, in actions and in manners, in a short two or three months, he became as vulgar and abandoned a vagabond, as any in the prison. He seemed to have lost all that ambition, commonly created by an extensive education, and to have merged his every thought, with composure and contentment, in the dreariness of a prison life. It was a strange and rapid mutation; and evinced the ease with which impurity, may be grafted upon the thoughtless. A man, whom education may be supposed to have refined, regards too often, his sentence to imprisonment, as a death-blow to his ambition, and his secluded dome, as the sepulchre of all his future hopes.

His fortitude entirely deserts him ; and his mind, in bending itself to the capacities of those around it, loses its equilibrium, its magnanimity, and its virtue, and precipitates itself, speedily, without a stopping post or medium, from the eminence of modesty, to the very abyss of shamelessness. With a low and ignorant man, it is entirely different. The society of the prison is, perhaps, greatly similar to that with which he has uniformly mingled ; and he can readily assimilate himself to the manners of his new companions, without descending to any thing particularly ignoble, and without debasing his own specific character. At the moment of receiving his sentence, he may have felt the most pointed agony of heart ; but when once he has mingled with his *legalized* companions in the prison, how speedily every agonizing feeling deserts him ! He becomes as it were, most completely at home, and sometimes is happy to a proverb.

There was a country fellow in the prison, during my incarceration, sentenced for Ten Years, who only wanted his wife and his fiddle, to make him contented, as he said, to spend there his days. Upon the mind of such a being, *no* sentence, under the present system, could operate with a desirable effect. He had almost enough to eat ; worked less than when at liberty ; and had no ambition in the world to gratify, beyond what I have named. There were, also, several in the prison, who were, at their conviction,

or immediately previous to it, had been, in the service of the United States as common soldiers, who felt themselves in the same felicitous situation. Creatures who would, as they often expressed themselves, rather be imprisoned *seven* years in the State Prison, than be compelled to serve out the period of their enlistment, *five* years in the army. What sentence can possibly operate, to the reforming of such minds ?

It is only upon the sensitive heart, that a sentence operates with a *dreadful* effect. When all that once was lovely, is withered and blasted by crime ; when the friends of our early life, depart from and desert us ; when the sword of justice is brandished over our heads, menacing our hopes with desolation, and our homes with ruin ; when we stand as it were upon the threshold of social life, to be doomed in a moment to the sable realm of fiends ; when the eye of apathy is fixed upon us, and the barbarous sneer at our degradation ; to the heart of sensibility—to the bosom of shaded virtue—to the soul that can truly feel—most dreadful is the agony of that melancholy hour—most torturing the sentence, which dooms us to our fate. Shame and ignominy, hang heavily around us ; the breath of desolation is blighting all our hopes ; an adversity, perhaps, unmerited, is swallowing up our fortunes ; and not a flower of felicity smiles in the parterre of our existence. At such a moment who can help ex-

claiming with the poet, while his soul realizes the idea :

“O ! what is life, that thoughtless wish of all :

“A drop of honey, in a draught of gall.”

But when the sentence has escaped the lips of the minister of the law ;—when the doors of a felon prison have opened to receive us ; when mantled in ignominy, and kenneled like a *dog*, we are made the companions of the most abominable, and the most desperate of the creation ;—when we behold ourselves stricken, as it were, from the very chain of being, and a thousand regrets and sorrows are chafing our every thought ;—the bosom of sensibility must then cease to value life, and must sicken at the thought of its loathsome prolongation. Ten thousand deaths, become preferable, to one paltry and noxious life. Reft of character, friends and liberty—estranged from the affections, the warmest, dearest, fondest affections of our hearts—without a smile of pity to cheer, or a gleam of commiseration to light us ;—our parents perhaps indifferent to our sufferings, and our wives and children despising us—we have nothing, in the wide universe, for which we can wish to live—nothing gleaming around us, that is worth our living for. Oh ! I should be sorry that my worst enemies (and heaven knows that I have many of them,) should know the import of such feelings, by melancholy experience. But without

that experience, I think that no one can realize the misery, which I have attempted to describe. It once suggested the following stanzas :

Than breathe, in the gloom of a prison,  
The air of contempt and of shame ;  
Than live, for the brutal derision,  
Of monsters, too vile for a name :  
Than linger in lonely seclusion,  
And pitiless, send forth a sigh  
From a heart, weeping blood in profusion,  
How sweet, O ! how sweet, 'twere to die,

Than drag on a life of depression,  
'Mid cruelty's shackles and cells ;  
Than bear the unfeeling expression,  
Of hearts, where no charity dwells ;  
Than, while all our fibres are shaking,  
And not a fond bosom is nigh,  
To wait, like a slave, the heart's breaking,  
Sweet, sweet, 'twere this instant to die.

Upon such feelings, the sentence of the law most powerfully operates. Every moment of the sentence creeps slowly along ; time rolls heavily around upon the wheels of the lazy clock ; impatience lashes it with its nettles, but the hours accelerate not their speed. The mind grows languid under the pressure of disappointment ; languor is succeeded by a daily increasing irritability, which the merest trifle excites ; until soured by misfortune, and vexed with all around it, the sensitive bo-

some settles down into a something, greatly bordering, upon a fixed, a dismal, and a solitary misanthropy.

For my own part, I have ever been peculiar for an excess of sensibility, which too often betrays me into a palpable sort of childhood. The least touch of calamity, is capable of awakening me to the most inconsolable and pointed grief. At my sentence, I had many reflections, to scorch my very soul. I was ruined in character, degraded in my profession, and stigmatized with crime. Those who should have been my friends, stood aloof from and abandoned me; my enemies thickened round me, and calumniated me unpunished; and the very creatures, who had profited, by a childish confidence that had ruined me, joined, blasphemously, with the world, in reviling and despising me. In the desolation of my fortunes, and the blasting of my hopes, there was one whose destitution was identified with mine. Like a solitary flower, on some lately blasted heath, with no glowing bud to cheer, and no balmy dew to nourish it, the idol of my soul stood mourning over my fortunes. The sneer and the scoff of the inhuman fell around her, and her path was musical with the hissing of the unfeeling. The situation of my wife, unprotected and exposed to insult as she was, gave the deepest agony, to the very ligaments of my soul. Through all the horrors of a dreadful and ungenerous persecution, awakened on my part,

by a puerile imprudence ; in the doleful solitude of my infamy, when all besides deserted me, and censured even the exercise of sympathy towards me ; when apathy used its eloquence to wean and estrange her from me ;—dishonoured as I was, she still adhered to my fortunes, and, even in the helpless hour of condemnation, would not, could not, be constrained to abandon me. Although every worldly feeling arrayed itself against her, yet she clung to me the closer, from my very destitution. My only friend—constant in adversity, as in prosperity—despising the censure of her friends for her adherence, and disregarding the pitiful malevolence of the world :—towards such an invaluable being, whom I had miserably degraded, what must have been my feelings, when on the eve of being separated, as it were, eternally from her ? Dull, and cold, and indurated, is the bosom, that would not be frantic, under circumstances like these. This was, certainly, the most trying hour of my life. Persecuted by villianny—tortured by ingratitude—chafed by my own *imprudence*—and the tenderest chord of my bosom distended, ruthlessly, to a breaking, I realized what language is too beggarly to describe. Gladly would I have taken the “wings of the morning,” and flown, forever, from the horrid scenes of mortality. Gladly would I have eviscerated, my innumerable cares, in the dismal and howling wilds, and wrapped in the solitude of my own lamentable ad-

versity, have forgotten all the world, but the partner of my sorrows. In the full realization of my desolate situation, I aspired such a wish, in the following extract, from some stanzas, dedicated to my wife.

On some desert isle, in the foam of the ocean,  
O! were I an exile from man's savage view;  
I'd live and I'd love with unshaken devotion,  
And bury my sorrows, my dearest, with you.

From the haunts of the ingrate, with you separated,  
The woes of the world, O! I'd narrowly scan;  
There feel, that all friends are but tygers, unsated,  
And find e'en Hyena's, more friendly than man.

But now—no bright sunshine, around me is gleaming  
Of joy—nor a ray of contentment's in view;  
My heart-strings are crack'd—and the tide of life's  
streaming—  
None—none will remember me, ANNA, but you.

In the breast of every man, educated as well as illiterate, there are chords whose vibration is unutterable anguish. They may be motionless, under a variety of vicissitudes; but, when the finger of grief actually touches them, and wakes them into life, most melancholy is their cadence, most agonizing their thrill. Nature speaks through every look, and every action of the afflicted, and the em-

bellishments of education, are but handmaids to their misery. Whatever may have been their situations in life—whether low or elevated—the lonely wretchedness which surrounds them, preys vitally upon their hearts, and leaves them to corrosive melancholy, and unavailing regret. At such a time, the sentence of the law chafes them to distraction. Then the miserable effects of criminality, force themselves, irresistibly, into notice; and the mind realizes, the most acute and pungent sorrow. Then is—

“the ripe time of man’s misery ;  
 “When all his thoughts, like over-laden trees,  
 “Crack with the fruits they bear.”

It is certain, that the imposing of a restraint upon a man’s liberty, for a number of years, or for life, becomes greatly divested of its horror, when he is resting under the assurance of obtaining, by a mere propriety of conduct in prison, a mitigation of his punishment, and a restoration to liberty. He derives a consolation to himself, from the wretchedness of those around him; that others are *equally*, if not *more* wretched than himself. Is he sentenced for a term of years? he sees that there are many about him sentenced for life: his sentence *may* expire during his existence; their sentences never can. Is he sentenced for life? in a short *three* or *four* years, the executive clemency may reach him, and his prison doors, once more, will unfold him.

to freedom. If his conduct is esteemed, irreproachable, in the prison, the mediation of the Inspectors will consummate his wishes, although he should not have a feeling of contrition for the past.

To make sentences have the desired effect upon the minds of those convicted of actual crimes, perhaps it would be advisable, that they should be short, that they should be for *Solitude* alone, and that there should be no hope, no expectation of a pardon, but, in a case of satisfactorily proved innocence, or of manifest reformation. Then the purposes of the Criminal Statutes would be answered. Convicts would have an ample opportunity for reflection, without any conversation to divert, to occupy, or to vitiate their thoughts; fewer adepts in the theory of villiany, would be vomited from the prison; the prospect of a reformation, in wicked men, would be much more probable; and the corruption of those convicts, not utterly depraved, would be rendered less certain. A sentence then, *for any period*, would strike terror into the mind, There would not *then* be such a willingness to endure an incarceration, as is often now evinced. Fewer convicts would be seen peaceably tramping to the State Prison, for upwards of a hundred miles, with their hands tied together, with nothing but a rope yarn; and fewer would express their happiness at their arrival, on account of seeing their old friends.

Dissenting from my opinion, there are many who believe, that solitude, *without labour*, would be productive of the utmost evil. An imprisonment, in Solitude, for Two or Three years, say they, would assuredly drive a man *mad*—or, in the most favourable view of it, would render him, at his liberation, an unsocial, apathetic, idle, and valueless being. The seeing of himself torn from all that can make life valuable, and death happy, for a determinate, distant and irremissible period—for entire years; of being separated from those whom he loves—his parents, his wife, and his dear little children; of being tortured with anxiety, and agonized with sorrow; expectation sickening in the present, and hope frowning in the future—he would become the victim, immediately, to an extravagant grief—a grief that would eventuate in a pitiable Insanity. The poor creature would certainly become *mad*.—Now, it is indispensably necessary, in the first instance, to the realization of that grief, that the mind of the convict should be sensitive enough, to feel its doleful privation, to be the result of its crimes; for no man can be reasonably supposed to *grieve*, on account of an occurrence, of which he never had a knowledge. A convict must, therefore, realize his situation, before he can actually *grieve* on account of it; and it matters little, when his heart is sensible of its destitution, in what prison he is immured, whether in one of solitude, or of hard

labour. The mind that is, truly, alive to every feeling of sensibility ; that sees itself, irrecoverably, degraded through life ; and made the bye-word of the brutal, and the scorn of the unfeeling ; that views the bleakness of its hopes, through the tessel grating of its dungeon, and its expectations kindled and extinguished, at the capricious shrine of cruelty ; agony present to it, wherever its eye wanders, and accumulated horror, in the dark vista of years, awaiting its approach :—the mind that can contemplate such scenes, with indifference, must be *more* or *less* than human. In a prison of hard labour, the soul that realizes in such a view, its deplorable destitution, is as capable of *extravagant* grief, and as liable to insanity, as it, possibly, can be, in the loneliest cell of solitude. The grief of an elevated mind, is not to be diverted by a current of idle and obscene conversations, nor by the noise and bustle of mechanical pursuits. Brooding over its own wretchedness, and folded in the mantle of its own immediate misery, though the battlements of heaven were rocking around it, and the ramparts of earth were tottering to their base, yet its agony is unbroken, it is fixed and immoveable ;—contemplation giving it stability, and indulgence giving it strength. The destitution continues ;—grief chafes grief, and agony creates agony—hopelessness looks out upon it, from her horizon of gloom—and inhumanity wounds it with her serpentine vocality ;—until

resigning all its fortitude, and sinking into enervation, a lamentable Insanity, is too frequently the sequel. Reduce the human mind, in any prison, to the same situation, and the same consequences are inevitable. The same effect (of madness) was contemplated and suggested, to dissuade its advocates, from the adoption, of the present system of punishment. The idea of a hard labour imprisonment for a number of years, was, at that day, believed to be capable of producing such Insanity. And even at this experienced moment, Wonder opens her eyes, most glaringly to the fact, that men endure an incarceration, in this vile den of misery and corruption, the New-York State Prison, for years together, and are discharged, *rational* beings. This can only be attributed to habit ; for nothing is more eminently calculated to frenzy the mind, than its immediate translation, from the brilliant scenes of freedom, to the dreadful shades of privation and servitude. But, says philanthropy, in its warmth and exuberance, Solitude, if unproductive of immediate Insanity, will render a convict at his liberation, when the term of his sentence shall have expired, a mopish, inanimate and useless being. That without employment—without conversation---without any thing to divert his mind, he will constantly be *unlearning* every thing, that he ever knew. Be it so. It is better for society, that a man should be an ignorant *pauper*---an object of common cha-

city---a dependent upon public bounty, than an artful and plodding villian, continually preying upon its vitals, and setting to novices, the example of erime. If Solitude is capable of frittering away his knowledge, it is a consolation to know, that he will lose, not only his virtues, but that he will also *unlearn* his vices :---a blessedness, to which the law, most gloriously aspires. The same effect is at this moment, in a partial degree, produced upon the mind of many an educated and sensitive man, by an imprisonment in this prison. A train of unalterable reflections, directed to one particular object---a deprivation of what is necessary to the retention of his acquired knowledge---a laying aside of his former habits and manners, and the acquiring and adopting of others, illly suited to an already formed mind---an entirely new occupation of his soul, and that too upon subjects of the most trifling importance---conspire to produce in him, an enervation of mind, and an impotency of thought, disparaging his general knowledge, and eventually transforming him into the same identical being, that Solitude has the credit, *alone*, of being able to create.

The present system of punishment, is ineffectual---it is acknowledged to be so---and something should be adopted, to remedy the evils, which have, already, arisen, and still continue to grow out, of its utter inadequacy. The Inspectors of this prison, in their remarkable intelligence, have thought proper, in their official report, (for which see the Appendix) to stand

beneath the banner of philanthropy, and to impose upon the public their ill-grounded opinion. With a man unacquainted with the immediate concerns of the prison, and who is unaware of the fact, that ignorance and stupidity often characterize official characters, their opinions may readily have an undeserving currency. Their situations would certainly indicate a better knowledge, than others can possibly have, in the ordinary walks of society : for they are supposed to reason from experience—from what comes within the scope of their immediate knowledge. They give, in their report, their undivided opinion, “from observation,” that the “confining” of a convict “in a cell for a limited time,” of which” he “is made acquainted, and from which he is not permitted to hope for the least diminution,” instead of humbling and reforming, only “irritates and hardens” him. Now allow philanthropy to rely upon the opinion of the sagacious Inspectors formed actually “from observation,” and every fear of insanity, from extravagant grief, immediately is removed. But before such a reliance is placed upon their opinions, it might be well enough to advert to the instances given by them, where Solitude has been tried, and where its effects, as they instructively, “state, for the information of the Legislature,” have been satisfactorily tested. The instances are those of JOHN SMITH, sentenced for *Six* months, and JOHN WIGHTMAN, sentenced for *Three* months to

**Solitary Confinement.** If these were, merely, instances, offered for the consideration of the Legislature, avowedly, without any specific eye to accuracy, I should be silent as the grave. But as they are adduced as exemplifying testimony, of the inefficacy of Solitude, as developed in these two particular cases, it becomes me to notice the bare-faced attempt that has been made to trifle with, and mislead the public mind, and to gull it into conclusions incompatible with truth. I was myself, in the prison, for nearly *Three* months after the confinement of SMITH, pursuant to his sentence, and I may, consequently, speak *with certainty* as to him. He is represented as the most incorrigible of the two. Now, Smith was placed in the cells, as the Inspectors state ; but he was infinitely better off than any convict in the Prison-Yard. He uniformly had, with every Convict in the cells, to whom the prison allowance is made, better *diet* than any ordinary Convict, and had infinitely more of it. The sympathy of the Convicts, who distribute and prepare the provisions, was excited for him. He had no irons upon him but a little shackle on one of his ankles, with several links of chain, fastened with a staple in the floor, allowing him to walk to the extent of his cell. He had a Bible allowed him—and his only actual prison privation, was that of social communion with those within his hearing. He regularly three times every day, saw and spoke to, at least, two persons, when

receiving his food, viz. his Keeper, and the convict delivering it. Yet, this is the man upon whom the Inspectors intimate, that Solitude has been tried; "and whom they state, that they visited a few days previous to his liberation, and instead of an humble, contrite penitent, found a revengeful, hardened desperado." Now is there a tittle of honesty in the asseverations of their report? Can a reliance be placed, with safety, upon such *impotent* experiments? Who would, under such circumstances, and in such a situation, look forward, with the Inspectors, to the expiration of the Six months Solitude of a very wicked and bad man, with the expectation of seeing, or finding, at that period, a reform?—Who, but a victim to the most pitiable stupidity, would suppose it possible, that a vagabond, without shame, without refinement, without sensibility—who had been a long time in the prison of the County where he was convicted, and who had become accustomed to greater privations—having enough to eat, nay, more than satiated the daily cravings of nature, and getting that food regularly three times every day;—knowing himself to be better situated than those labouring in the prison; and looking with certainty to his release from his cell-confinement, at the expiration of six months from the day of his sentence:—who, I say, but the most stupid creature in existence, could anticipate a reform, in such a being, during such a period, and under such circumstances?

## LABOUR.

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"Tis false ! no Convict ever learnt a trade,  
That prov'd a blessing to him, in the shade  
Of this fell dome. But *labour*—vice's nurse—  
Here makes the *knave* a mortal *fiend*—or worse.

*Original MSS.*

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There are several branches of mechanical business, carried on in the prison :—Weaving, Shoemaking, Locksmithing, Comb-making, Coopering, Carpentering, &c., but in general, the work is done in the most barbarously wretched manner. There are very few good workmen, at any business conducted in the prison ; and, perhaps, not one, who there, acquired his knowledge. It is a mistaken notion of many, who profess to know something about the institution, that Convicts sentenced to it, invariably learn a good trade. No man ever learnt any mechanical business in the prison, that he was capable of practising, *with credit*, when liberated. In the

first place—there is an unconquerable want of attention and willingness, on the part of the convict. He is in hopes of a pardon—he derives no benefit from his work—he labours by coercion—and he is indifferent about learning. Secondly—there is too much labour required of him, in too small a time. The fear of being punished for deficiency of work, induces him to slight whatever work is committed for his performance. He, rightly, thinks it no small thing, to be kept upon bread and water, until he shall acquire the needed expedition, for the performance of his exorbitant task. Thirdly---the Convict is too short a time imprisoned, to perfect himself in any one branch of business. It is seldom the case, that a Convict for a term of years, without friends, is imprisoned more than Four years, however long may be his sentence. During that period, he will, perhaps, have worked at five or six different kinds of business, by the direction of the officers of the prison, without acquiring any useful knowledge of either of them. Fourthly---there are no proper persons provided to instruct them. The Superintendents of the different workshops, are always, *favoured* Convicts---not selected for their peculiar skilfulness, but, in reward for their sycophancy to the petty Keepers, recommending them to the situation, and whose beggarly consequence they must previously have flattered. This Convict-Superintendent is appointed to instruct the

learning Convict ; for the Keeper, if he even had mechanical skill enough to build a dust-box, or brains enough to bristle a wax-end, has only the steady duty assigned him in his shop, of watching the Convicts, and keeping them in their places. One Convict, generally hates to learn from another. He is unwilling to acknowledge his ability to teach him ; he envies him his situation ; he repels every attempt to exercise the needed authority over him, which his situation gives him ; he regards him as a spy to the Keeper---a sort of Jackall to a Lion ; there is an enmity between them, which never dies ; and he does not consequently learn. Thus the Convict remains ignorant, of every mechanical business. If the Keeper, of every work shop, were an experienced and able mechanic, and the Convicts were constrained to the steadfast pursuit of some one trade, chosen at their admission into the prison, and exercised within it, under the immediate instruction of such Keeper, during the entire period of a lengthy confinement, there might *then* be an opportunity of learning, if not perfectly, at least *partially*, a good and beneficial trade.

The Weaving is by far the most extensive business, that is carried on in the prison, and is under the superintendence of a creature, who receives, as I have before stated, his salary. of \$750 per annum, for literally doing nothing. He is assisted in his arduous duty of *doing nothing*, by several Convict-

Superintendents, who actually do *every thing* necessary to the earning of his salary. When a Convict falls short of his *required* task, it becomes this active officer's duty, to prefer a charge against him, before the Principal Keeper, and have him punished until he performs it. To hear the creature arguing like a prosecuting Attorney, before the august Court in the middle hall of the prison, for the punishment of a Convict, and, very often, prevaricating and lying in the most shameless manner, would ruffle the placidity of almost any temper, and excite the indignation of every being in existence. A creature, who was but the other day, cutting turves, bare-footed, in a filthy bog in Ireland, attempts to assume the consequence of an eloquent barrister, while his language is as elegant, as a coal-porter's, or a shoe-boy's, in the metropolis of his native land.—The yarn delivered to be manufactured, is generally very bad, although the tyrannizing SINECURIST, who has the charge of it, will allow no Convict to intimate it, lest it might discourage its weaving, and occasion a murmuring among the Convicts. I have known a Convict-Superintendent to be displaced by or through him, for frankly telling him of it, with a view of preventing an unmerited punishment upon a Convict, unable to perform a stipulated task, in the manufacturing of it into cloth. But bad or good, the yarn when coloured, is render entirely unfit for use. It is dyed, too hastily, by a few Convicts

who know nothing about the business, and who have no one to instruct them ; and is invariably burnt and destroyed by the unnecessarily powerful acids, commingled by them, injudiciously, in their own way, for the purpose. From bad yarn, burnt to a bare adhesion in colouring it, and manufactured by bad and inexperienced Weavers, what sort of cloth may commonly be expected ? Can it be, reasonably, expected to be good ? Can an honest reliance be placed upon goods manufactured under such circumstances ? I certainly think not.—The yarn is furnished by contractors, who pay a specific sum for the dying and weaving of it. But, yarn is allowed to be purchased at the expence of the State, for the clothing, &c. of the Convicts. It is generally coarse and strong yarn ; but it is a common thing to mix with it (six or seven hundred weight) a necessary quantity of *fine* yarn, for the accommodation of the Officers, and their innumerable friends.—The Weaving department of the prison, has for a number of years, been a source of peculiar felicity to the Keepers and others attached to the Building, and to many favoured friends in its immediate vicinity. A Keeper, who has had the honesty, to purchase, a small quantity of cloth, say two or three yards, has often been very agreeably astonished at finding *seven* or *eight* yards in the bundle, when opened by him, at his own home. I wish not to insinuate, that the Keeper ever connived at such a most flagrant act on the part

of the Convict-Superintendent, who put it up for him ; although the same villianous thing may have been repeated so frequently afterwards, as to become with him a matter of perfect expectation. No ! no ; far be it from me, however remotely, to insinuate such a thing. The Keeper when such an abominable act, as that of finding clothing for his family at the expense of the State, had been secretly practised upon his honesty, could only be silent—that was his only alternative ; for if he lisped a single word on the subject, the Convict-Superintendent, who had made his duty subservient to his generosity, would have been displaced and exemplarily punished ; and the family of the Keeper, must assuredly have suffered, to the value of the cloth. Instances of this kind have not been unfrequent, to the manifest displeasure of the honest Keeper, upon whom the impositions were practised. The same thing, precisely, may be said with respect to many other *customers* of the prison, whom a villian of a Convict-Superintendent, has had the impudence to impose on. O ! is it not a shame, that a Convict-Superintendent, should have the liberty of fitting a roll of cloth under the arm of an Officer or other customer, without his knowledge, and contrary to his will, every few hours in the day, at the expence of rigid honesty, and to the injury of the State ? But why am I speaking of Weaving in particular. Many a coat and pantaloons have been made for Keepers

which were never charged for by the Convict-Tailors; many an Officer has been shod against his will, by a Convict-Shoemaker; and many a rough brush has smoothed the pate of a comely and good natured Officer, that was never charged to him, nor intended so to be; *and all at the expence of the State.*

The State is humorously represented by the Convicts, to be an old HAG, with a long purse and a plenty of money, but entirely too lazy to take any kind of care of it. It is consequently deemed pardonable to slide a furtive hand into her pocket, and to filch from it, upon every occasion, whatever may be necessary, either for private aggrandizement, or individual good.

The labour, of many convicts, is contracted for by individuals, who employ them at various kinds of business. Some of them, whose labour would be worth eight or ten shillings, per day, at liberty, are hired out by the Agent at about forty cents. Where the convicts are employed at hard labour, some attention should be paid, by the Inspectors, to the moral tendency of their vocation, They ought not to be trained to the mysteries of any profession, that will enable them to prey, more successfully, upon the vitals of society, when liberated from their imprisonment. The engraving of plates the and sinking the dies for Counterfeit money, have already destroyed, essentially, the confidence of all business transactions; and it is impolitic, to say the

least of it, to open a new field for the exercise of perfidy, by teaching *bad* men to pick the locks of our peaceful habitations, and to pilfer from us the gatherings, of many an anxious hour of toil. There are a number of the convicts, hired out at a fixed and "daily stipend," who are employed as Locksmiths. I was in the prison, when the contract for that kind of labour went into operation; and of Five hundred and eighty convicts, there were at least Three hundred, who were anxious to be employed in that way. One of them accosted me once in my walks, and wished to know, from me, the period fixed for the continuance of the contract; supposing from my clerkship, that I would be able to give him, the most accurate information. I told him, that I understood it to be for Three Years. "Well," said he in reply, "I have Two Years and a little more to stay—and if they'll only let me go to work at locksmithing *now*, I'll promise never to ask them for a pardon." It was a novel thing, to hear such a manifest insolicitude, for an immediate liberation; and I was curious enough, contrary to my usual custom, to ask for and learn the reason. The fellow was disposed to be communicative, and evinced as great a desire to gratify me, as I had to be gratified. "I have," said he, "no trade that I ever intend to follow, to get a living by—I don't mean to work, and the world shall support me without it. If I understood the picking of Locks,

“and the making of *dubs*, (or skeleton keys) there would not, in a year after my liberation, be a wealthy store, in any sea port in America, but what I had entered ; and I should make an instant fortune, by stripping them of their valuables.” I believed the villain :—and felt firmly assured, that he would crucify a nation, to serve his hellish views.—His wishes were gratified with respect to the employment ; and perhaps his proficiency, in his new vocation, will be amply certified, in the course of a few months, when his sentence shall have expired. I have not the smallest doubt, but that the fellow will keep his word ; and that society will have an opportunity of thanking the Inspectors of the New-York State Prison, for their kindness, in furnishing its walks, with experienced *rogues*, and with pick-locks of their own special making. The Inspectors, however, with a sagacity deserving of immortality, have made the happy discovery, that “*no great evil*,” can result from the employment of the convicts, at the making of locks, combs, ploughs, &c., for this plain and extremely satisfactory reason, because of “*the great diversity of employment*.” It will certainly afford every Shopman, as well as Housekeeper, a pleasure to know of this matchless discovery ; because, he can now, quietly, roll himself up in his blanket or his sheet, and refresh himself, after the toils of the day, without the fear of being aroused by some desperate midnight plunderer, who has

penetrated his home by the means of a false key. The infallibility of the Inspectors, in which he will implicitly confide, will be his security, at least, against State Prison-educated pick-locks. The Inspectors are much wiser than I am, and much more capable of judging on subjects of which they have, if any, but a superficial view. But when I hear, as I often have, convicts boasting of their having *dubbed* (as they call it; meaning *I believe*, the opening of a lock, by means of a false key) the locks of twenty or thirty stores and dwellings, in the course of one evening; of having entered them, and carried way, whatever suited their purposes; when I remember their acts of avowed desperation, where detection had nearly taken place; when I contemplate the difficulty of obtaining a Locksmith, to perform the needed labour, of making false keys for them, where they are wholly unable to perform the work themselves; I am induced to dissent, entirely, from the opinion of the much wiser Inspectors, and deprecate the employment of convicts at locksmithing, as a most serious, nay, incalculable evil. Where they are unacquainted with *locksmithing* themselves, their usual way is to get the pattern of the needed key, upon a piece of *putty*, or other ductile matter, which they take to a locksmith, who makes the *dub*, agreeable to their order. A bad man is often greatly puzzled to find a locksmith, upon whom he can rely, and who will

perform the work. He knows his own guilt, and he thinks every one suspects him. He is afraid to ask others to perform the labour, which, if capable, he would perform himself; and he is, consequently, obliged oftentimes, to abandon his nefarious project. But the Inspectors, whose duty it is to place a convict in such a situation, that he may be able to acquire regular habits of industry, at the same time that he learns a trade, which will procure him a living when liberated; have thought proper to remove the disability, under which *rogues* have hitherto laboured, by making those committed to their charge, *experienced* locksmiths, in every way capable of making their own *dubs*. House-breaking will now, speedily, become as common as petit larceny, and after a little while, a door lock will have lost all its security. The convicts employed at locksmithing will, always, make a greater proficiency, than those engaged at any other mechanical business in the prison. They will be anxious to learn; they will direct their every thought to it; they will find an individual interest in the acquirement of such mechanical skill; and they will regard it, as a sort of stepping stone to an immediate fortune, upon being liberated. The rifling of a store, will put them speedily in clover, and their *scientific* knowledge, will preserve them, constantly, from want. Their labour is an actual apprenticeship to guilt; and the very convicts, with all

their ignorance, chuckle at the imbecility, that would introduce or tolerate among them, the practice of a trade, adapted exactly, to the views and wishes of a thief, with the idea of its being regarded by him, as any thing of a *punishment*—as any thing of a torture, effective of a *reformation*. I have heard them sneeringly ask (and, perhaps, there is an instructive moral lesson in the question,) “ why the Inspectors did not make *Engravers* out of *Counterfeiters*, as well as *Pick-locks* out of *Thieves*.” And there, certainly, does appear to be as much propriety in the one, as in the other. If men were strictly virtuous, there would be no necessity of a criminal code, nor of a prison. And when a man falling into crime, could *certainly* be brought to a detestation of it, and to a perfect reformation, by an imprisonment of his person, in a prison of hard labour, it would matter but little, at what particular labour he might be employed—whether at *locksmithing* or *coopering*—*engraving* or *ploughmaking*. But, we live in a degenerate age. Vice is growing daily amongst us ; and all the efforts to crush or to suppress it, are at best, but *experiments*. Still, however, there are measures whose adoption, would be productive of immorality ;—measures, that would rather *create*, than *destroy* vice. Such measures should, at all times, be cautiously avoided. No convict should be employed in any prison, at any labour, that would give a greater facility, to his depreda-

tions upon society, when liberated from his confinement. Once convicted, and reft of his character, he may be more naturally suspected, than previously of crime. His propensity to vice, becomes *legally* manifest—and a weapon should not, voluntarily, be thrust into his hands, to destroy or ruin the well being of society. No man in his senses would commit a sword to a madman; *Nemo sanus ferrum committeret insano*.—The peaceful walks of society should be well guarded. The dæmon voice of a highwayman, should not be tolerated in its shouting, nor the *dub* of a State Prison-educated pick-lock pardoned, for intruding within our homes.

As I have stated, in a previous part of this work, immediately upon my confinement, I was introduced to a loom and shuttle. I complained of my near-sightedness, and it was construed into a wish to *avoid*, and a scheme to *get rid of* work. The Keeper took me, for examination, to the beardless puppy of a *then* Resident Physician, who positively declared, that he could discover no film obstructing or blurring my sight. He had been *instructed* on the subject; and if there had been a blindness as visible as the solar ray, he would not, perhaps, in the easiness of his conscience, have thought himself bound, so instructed, to discover it. The reader will remember, that my complained of cecity, led to the bread and water punishment, which I have stated, as having endured. Upon representing it

to the Superintendent of Weaving, and urging, with him the impossibility of weaving *fine* yarn, from the multitude of threads which I broke, without being able to perceive them, he flew into a violent passion, used to me the most vulgar and minacious language, in the hearing of the convicts around us, and finally left me, by saying "Dom it, I "dinna care mon, if ye had nae ee in your hale "head; the claith must be wove." I was much mortified. I cursed my evil stars, and sighed un-availingly, as I drove my shuttle to and fro,—

O! who would be a *slave*,  
And bear the kick of every *ruffian* foot,  
Nor dare to *look*, nor *speak*?

The willingness evinced by me, to comply with the regulations and requirements of the prison, procured me the sympathy of the Keeper, in whose shop I was labouring. He interceded with the Superintendent of Weaving, in my behalf, who at his request, put me to the weaving of very coarse work:—a species of flannel, which is made into shirts for the convicts. I continued at weaving, for a year and a few days, when I was *ordered*, from my loom, to a clerkship in the Prison Yard. And here ended all my mechanical acquirements.—My new situation required only the labour of writing, and I filled it for upwards of a year, without censure or reproof. At the expiration of that period, a vacancy occurred

in the *Back Office*, (as it is called) where the posting, arranging and preparing, of *all* the prison accounts takes place, under the *supposed* eye of the Agent, and where all the account books of the prison are kept, and I was again transferred in order to supply it. In this last situation, I remained employed, until my restoration to liberty, a period of about Fifteen months. The entire business of the Office, was done by me, or under my direction, without much pains being taken, by either the Agent or his Clerk, to test its accuracy ; although I really believe, that my assiduity and attention, superceded the necessity of any such trouble. Prudence, however, might have suggested it, as necessary, to the Agent and his Clerk; more especially, after my discovering and pointing out to them, the grossest improprieties and errors, committed by some of those who had preceded me as Convict-Clerks in that office, and in whom they had most implicitly confided. I had in my vocation, a great variety of business. *Now* I would be an *Accountant*, and be collating the prison accounts ; *then* I would be a *Poet*, and revising the Agent's stanzas. *To-day* I would be a *Lawyer*, drawing a Village Petition, for a Hog-Law ; *to-morrow* a *Divine*, and, from a Syllabus furnished me, writing a sermon already preached. In *one* hour I would be a *Schoolmaster*, teaching the Keeper's children ; in *another* the *Amanuensis* of the Keeper, entering the discovered

scars of a convict, in his rubs and scratches through life.—I was, however, in the highest convict-situation in the prison, in the estimation of both Officer and Convict ; and, if there had been any thing capable of consoling me, under my melancholy affliction, it would have been that, of being much more comfortable, than the generality of convicts, and of being removed, almost wholly, from among them. But with me, it was out of the question. I had no moment of mental tranquility. The more intercourse that I had with the Officers of the prison, the more strongly I detested them. If they attempted to sympathise with me, I hated them the more, because I knew them to be insincere. I always remembered the words of Lord Bacon : *Viri potestatibus sublimes, ipsi tibi ignoti sunt*. The least mark of their confidence or esteem, visited my soul like a mildew. I knew the depth of their friendship, and watched narrowly their movements. I had seen too many poor creatures, dragged mercilessly before the Principal Keeper for punishment, and often punished by him, for not performing extravagant tasks—labour required of them, beyond their ability :—Convicts, who, in previous days, had been objects, apparently, of their special regard, and who now stood trembling on the verge of eternity, from the mere *brutality* of their friendship :—I had seen too many such instances, not to regard even their good nature, with the utmost concern. Polyphemus loved Ulysses, with the same ardour,

that they love the *least* vicious man among the convicts : their beckon is friendship, but their embrace is death.

In the estimation of many, the compelling of a convict to labour, serves greatly to aggravate his punishment of imprisonment, as well as to *deter* others from the commission of crime. I should, no doubt, be of the same opinion, had I never known any thing of the subject, by experience. It is a theme upon which genius has written, and eloquence lingered, and philanthropy dwelt ; and it appears to be almost a criminality, to dissent from the prevalent opinion. But on that subject, there can be no better judges than those, who have been convicts themselves. I may, therefore, be allowed to estimate the feelings of other convicts, by the barometer of my own. The infliction of a punishment of hard labour, derives from the very lips of the Judge, pronouncing the sentence upon the convict, in the first instance, a sort of imposing horror. He immediately anticipates every thing unpleasant, odious and terrible ;—he knows nothing definite with respect to it ; and, until habit makes him familiar with the prison, he is never quietly settled down at his labour. The horror subsides not in a moment—it departs gradually from his mind. Labour then becomes to him a desirable recreation, beguiling his weary hours, and giving employment to his thoughts. Time hangs very heavy, upon the

hands of a convict, who has the least tittle of reflection, even when employed : it would creep a thousand times slower, if he had nothing at all to do. For my own part, whilst I was weaving, I often worked, when there was no actual necessity for it, for no other reason, but to engage my mind. I flew to my loom, as a relaxation from reflection—a temporary antidote to grief. And doleful, indeed, would have been my situation, had I been destitute of employment ;—had I been shut up a solitary cell, to brood, in silent sorrow, over my immediate wretchedness.—I feel convinced, that there is not a convict in the prison, who would not prefer a sentence to hard labour, to that of Solitude—who would not rather endure an imprisonment, at *hard labour*, for *Five* years, than in *Solitude*, for *Three* years. It is no aggravation of the punishment of imprisonment ; on the contrary, *hard labour* is but a welcome recreation, to every convict, in his secluded situation. As to its *detering* others, either by example or otherwise, from the commission of crime, I cannot believe it. Upon the mind of a bad man, who sets the laws at defiance ; or one who is so ignorant, as not to know the consequences of crime ; or the infatuated creature, who listens to and obeys, the syren voice of iniquity, with the knowledge of its guilt ; *example* can produce no lasting impression. And the knowledge, of the existence of laws prohibiting crime, in its variety of shapes, will operate

upon *all others*, with equal effect, as the most degrading *example*. I have seen men committed as convicts to the prison, who, not a month before, passed through it as visitors; and one might rather suppose, that they were looking for situations, determinedly, for themselves, than learning from the degrading *example* of others, to fear the punishment of crime. I have heard convicts, immediately after their admission, expressing their indifference at the loss of their liberty, because they would be able to learn a good trade. Not all the horrors of an imprisonment at hard labour—not all the shame and humiliation of crime—seemed to waken in their minds the most trifling regret. They were, in general, low and uneducated people, who had resided, from their nativity, in the country. They were, as the Inspectors most beautifully call them, “tillers of ground;” and were, perhaps, ignorant of every branch of mechanics. *Example*, at no time, can serve to *deter* such beings, from the commission of crime. They see a prospect, in the very worst stage of criminality, of being ultimately benefited. If they commit a crime, and escape detection, they immediately, enjoy the fruit of their villianny, without a corroding thought; and if they are *detected*, and are sent to the State Prison, they are felicitated by the erroneous idea, “*that they will learn a good trade.*”

I conceive the labour of the prison, to be highly

injurious to the morals of the Convicts, without being of any *real* utility, to the State. Where men are labouring together, and having constant opportunities of conversation, it is madness to suppose that they will ever be silent ; and where there are so many bad men, without any particular inducement to the practice of virtue, their conversation and uniform deportment, will necessarily be wicked—corruptive of lesser depravity, and generative of deeper guilt. To one who has framed his opinions in the school of experience, as I have, it is idle for the Inspectors to talk of the “*state of perfection, to which the concerns of the prison, are fast approximating.*” If they mean, that it is a perfection in guilt—if they mean that it is an utter depravation of morals—if they mean that it is a scathing of the most lingering trace of virtue, “*to which the concerns of the institution*” under the present system “*are fast approximating,*” I am decidedly willing to concur with them in opinion. Labour, to them, may seem productive of peculiar benefit, in reforming the Convict ; but it strikes me as impossible, that they can be so pore-blind, as not clearly to discover, that the depravity and the wickedness of every day’s developement, is produced, entirely, by the intercourse of the Convicts, while labouring together, under the immediate direction of their Keepers. They are badly informed upon the subject ; for I know that they have no knowledge of the general character of the

Convicts, and no opinion of either the *moral* or *financial* concerns of the prison, but what is derived from the information of others. I am willing to believe, if it will gratify a being in the world, that not one of the Inspectors *profits* a fraction by the labour of the Convicts, although every one of them, has more or less work performed, every day, in the work-shops of the prison. Some of them take from the Agent, Five or six hundred dollars worth of manufactured goods, every quarter of a year. They sell them by retail, without deriving (*I suppose*) a farthing, to themselves, (good natured souls !) of benefit or profit.

When the Convicts are steadily employed, one might naturally suppose that their labour would defray, at least, the expenses of the prison, rather than involve the State, in an annual debt of several thousands of dollars. In Vermont, where the Convicts are employed at hard labour, the State Penitentiary cleared its expenses during the last year, as it uniformly has done for several years past, and netted a profit of 545 dollars and 92 cents to the State ; while in New-York, the inhabitants are taxed to support a parcel of worthless vagabonds, who do not perform labour enough, to defray their comparatively trifling expences of less than 20 cents per day; and who merely fit themselves, for deeper deeds of desperation upon being liberated.—There is a great deal of labour performed in the prison, and there

are many greedy moths to destroy the produce of it, and to fatten on its spoil :—Creatures, whom humanity, sympathy, gratitude, and interest, conspire to give a support to, even at the *expense* of the State. But so it is : when economy has lost its influence, and self-aggrandizement has felt its strength, public justice is defeated, public duty is unperformed, and *honesty* melts away, before the acidity of avarice, like the valuable pearl in the goblet of Cleopatra.

## DIET.

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Sunk be his home in embers red,  
And cursed be the meanest shed  
That e'er shall hide the *villian's* head,  
*Who'd furnish want and woe.*

*Scott.*

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The diet of the prison is very coarse indeed, and the allowance made by the Inspectors, is not, in general, had by the convicts. I apprehend, that very few will be inclined to doubt the veracity of the INSPECTORS, with respect to the *quality* of the food, that is furnished to the Convicts. They make a contract for its delivery; they declare that they have made the concerns of the prison "*their daily business*" since their appointment to office; they have had ample opportunities of judging, of the *quality* of the provisions furnished by the contractors; and they may, reasonably, be supposed to be perfectly well qualified, to form an opinion on the subject. In their

report, they state, for the information "of persons "whose distance, from the abode of misery, prevents "their becoming acquainted with its discipline," among other things, relative to the treatment of a Convict, "that his food is of the *coarsest* kind, which "costs 6½ cents per day :"—in the superlative degree, "of the *coarsest* kind." For the reader to understand the actual meaning of the Inspectors, he must imagine himself to be viewing a Convict, at the munching of his daily meals. In the *morning*, (after having fasted perhaps thirteen or fourteen hours,) he must see him regaling himself with a luxurious slice of his daily manchet of (nearly black) rye bread, and with about a pint of Cacao sweetened with molasses. At *noon*, sitting himself down to a dish of unsavoury and unpalatable Soup, without vegetables or thickening ; to about half a pound of beef from the *neck* or *heels* of some lean and antiquated bullock, and to a couple of refuse potatoes, about the size of a hen's egg, raised perhaps in the soil of some valuable swamp, from the delicacy of the odour, they, invariably, possess. In the *evening*, when his daily labour is over, refreshing himself with a trencher or plate of *Mush* or *Supan* (made, frequently, from Indian meal, in which the corn stalks, have, economically, been ground,) with half a gill of molasses, most generally acidulated, and, very often, of the most filthy consistence. On Thursday, in every week, to a slice of boiled pork, (the best article

that is furnished to the Convicts,) and some (*worm-eaten*) pea or bean soup ; and on Sunday, (or Monday,) to about four ounces of codfish, and a couple of potatoes.—The Inspectors are, undoubtedly, correct in the assertion, that “ *the food is of the coarsest kind.*” I have seen Bread and Beef served out to the Convicts, that could only be concocted, *naturally*, by the iron-digesting stomach of the Ostrich ; and Pork and Fish, whose very smell would make the stomach wamble with nausea. In May, 1822, *for several days together*, the bread was so poisonously bad, that many of the Convicts became sick from the eating of it, and the murmuring of hunger became general among them. Complaints are often made to the Inspectors, Agent, and Principal Keeper, on account of it ; but it is very seldom that any satisfaction is obtained by the Convict. However bad his treatment may be, it is deemed an irremissible presumption in him, to murmur or complain. The Officers have enough to eat themselves, and of the quality calculated to satiate their appetites ; and little do they heed the murmur of the famished Convict, upon whom an unfeeling Contractor has imposed his *poisonous* provisions, and thus speculated, emphatically, upon the very life-blood of his heart. The scale of being, even among *bad* men, should not be allowed to graduate, according to the avarice and inhumanity of a Contractor, who,

“ —were the path to one poor *dollar*, pay’d

“ With *Convict* hearts, would trample o’er them all

“ To grasp it—tho’ his full bags were bursting.”

It is an act of justice, however, to say, that the present Principal Keeper, (Mr. Board,) has ever been minutely attentive to the diet-concerns of the prison, and has evinced a disposition, to prevent the practising of frauds, by the Contractors, upon hungry and suffering humanity. Let them be bad, and wicked, and profligate, and every thing else abominable in the compass of language to name, still, it is only the contemplation of the law inflicting the punishment upon the Convicts, that they should receive a salutary correction, with the hope of effecting a reformation in their morals ; and not that they should be subject to the ungenerous speculation, of any and every wicked creature, who may make a contract, to furnish them with food.—The *quality* and *quantity* of the food, should in no event be dispensed with ; and no Contractor should (were he even the brother of an Inspector, acting for the Inspector and himself, but in his own name) be allowed to draw, from the coffers of the State, the price agreed to be given for a *good* ration, when the ration delivered to the Convict, was poisonously *bad*.—The usual complaint of a deficiency of beef and bread, and the unwarrantable badness very often of both, is neither tolerated nor countenanced by the law, that has secluded the

Convict from the world. The State pays for the furnishing of good and wholesome provisions, to each Convict, in an estimated-to-be-sufficient quantity. If the Contractor *imposes* musty Rye Flour, or Indian meal, upon the Convicts, as is frequently the case, or withholds from a hungry man one solitary ounce of beef, he not only practises a barbarous cruelty upon the imprisoned Convict, but (as he receives the full price of a good ration,) most shamefully cheats the State. It is the province of the Inspectors to investigate and remedy every such evil; but little can such an event be hoped for, when the Contractor is the *Brother*, or the *Nephew*, of one of the Inspectors.

The are many, perhaps more than one half of the Convicts, who could consume twice as much as their regular allowances, without being chargeable with gluttony :—men, who work hard, and could eat hearty. Such men are in a continually, *consuming* state of starvation, without being suffered, more than barely to murmur, and *never* to complain, without an immediate reprimand, or a menace of punishment. The *request* for more provisions in June, 1818, and the determination of the Convicts not to work, upon being *denied* by the Inspectors, was construed into an attempt to break prison; the Convicts were locked up, promiscuously, in rooms; several military companies, were paraded before the prison; the magisterial officers of the city were

called upon, and they visited the convicts; confession reigned, in the horrid den, for two entire days; but not a word was heard from the convicts, but bread! bread! bread!—Not a muscle was moved towards the breaking of the prison—not a glance was seen, that would indicate such a wish. The word *bread*, became the passport to an immediate punishment; and more than Twenty Convicts, who merely crawled from the Cells, to the Hospital to die, after their Nine and Ten weeks of barbarous punishment, (continually upon bread and water,) form a pitiable mound of evidence, of the heinousness of the request. It was a monstrous crime for a famishing man, who was labouring *daily* very hard, to ask for more provisions; and O! it was a humane and feeling thing in the Inspectors, to regulate the measure of their punishment, according to the decrease of a Convict's strength, and the loss of a Convict's flesh.—It is here necessary to remark, by way of explanation, that the Inspectors, when they visited the Cells, where the convicts, concerned in this business, lay extended upon their backs, in chains, would always feel of the convict's leg; and by its *diminution*, they estimated the extent or sufficiency of his punishment.

There is an actual commerce carried on, by the convicts in the prison: their *specie* being *Tobacco*, and their *merchandize* their provisions. The market prices are regulated, according to the plenty or

scarcity of their *Specie*, which although strictly prohibited, finds its way to them, through the Keepers, Visitors, Contractors, &c.--Pork, beef and bread command a ready sale. A convict, who is willing to dispense with any portion of his food—who abstains entirely from pork or beef—or who occasionally prefers tobacco, traffics it away to a half starved fellow convict; and in this manner, the wants of many hearty-eating men are relieved, whose regular flesh allowances, are, to each of them, but a *mouthful*. In the way of purchase, a *wealthy* convict, sometimes acquires a property, in perhaps a dozen allowances of pork, which being drawn but *once* a week, is something of a luxury, commanding a good price, and is ever in great demand. In the Refectory, the convict, generally, has a bag or wallet, in which he keeps his food. This bag is hung under the table, at which all the convicts sit at their daily meals, like the hardy Spartans, in the days of Lycurgus, at their bowls of black broth. The State Prison *Ferret*, whom I once so mightly offended, by a mere look, takes it upon himself, every little while, to hunt up all such bags, and examine into the quantity of provisions, that they severally contain. In all cases, where there is more than is allowed—more than the convict, can be supposed to have drawn—he takes the owner of it before the Principal Keeper for punishment, for trading to obtain it; if the con-

vict is not punished, the provisions are taken from him ; and a hungry Keeper on his night-watch, if it happens to be Pork, is economical enough to devour it—to prevent its being spoiled. This is certainly below the character of any *decent* man; and is evincive of the petty, though brutal spirit of a tyrant. There is something in it, of the greatest littleness. To take from the craving stomach of a convict, a trifling piece of coarse beef, a small mouthful of pork, or a loaf of rye bread, merely, because he had *traded* (that is, given a satisfactory equivalent to his brother convict) for it, after it has been regularly drawn from the Contractor, is a mark of the utmost brutality, to the poor convict, which neither justice nor mercy will justify or warrant ; and an evidence in the Keeper, of the greatest futility, disgraceful to humanity, and profitless to the prison. Lord Chesterfield says, “ that a frivolous  
“ curiosity about trifles, and a laborious attention  
“ to little objects, which neither *require*, nor de-  
“ serve, a moment’s thought, lower a man ; and  
“ cause him to be esteemed incapable of greater  
“ matters.” A little mind becomes bloated with pride, the instant that it feels itself in the possession of power ; and as it is a stranger to every thing elevated, it must wield its sceptre in the filthy dust, in which it has been accustomed to grovel, and exercise a brutality and tyranny in *little* affairs, just adapted to its capacity. O! how often have I seen

that brutality and tyranny exercised, at the expense of every elevated feeling of the heart. O! how often have I seen *littleness* stalking about, upon the stilts of petty power, with the pride of EBLIS in its heart, and the blast of the desert upon its lips, wounding, and torturing, and agonizing all around it. Shielded by the law, it could torture with impunity—without the fear of a merited retribution of justice. Many a pitiable heart has wept, from its barbarous tyranny; and many a bosom has sighed its last, from its horrid, horrid cruelty. If humanity has a friend, or pity has an advocate—if piety has a solace, or religion has a charm—the speculation of apathetic *littleness*, will not long be unrestrained. New-York will proudly set an example, in *this prison*, which will not speedily be forgotten; and all those vampires, who now infest its purlieus, disrobed of their trappings, and branded with their guilt, will be permitted to retire to the vulgarity from which they crept; and whenever in subsequent life, they shall advert to their mortality, (in the language of Byron)

“A fire unquench’d, unquenchable,  
“Around, within each heart shall dwell,  
“Nor ear shall hear, nor tongue shall tell  
“The tortures of that inward hell!”

## HOSPITAL.

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Like Milton's lazar house it stood,  
Its threshold stain'd with human blood ;  
Where *inhumanity* was nurse  
And death was Gov'nor of the house.  
M'Fingal.

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The Hospital for sick convicts, consists of four ordinary rooms, in the northerly wing of the prison, severally fitted up, with six bunks, with a straw bed in each, for those who are admitted as *permanent* patients. The number of *Hall* patients, as they are termed, that is, those who have not had *beds* assigned them, is often very great. On the basement floor of the building, and in the same wing, is the Apothecary's Shop of the prison, which is committed to the charge of a Convict-Superintendent, under the direction of a Resident Physician, appointed annually, by the Inspectors, and whose duty it is, to reside in the prison. The Resident Physician is generally, an ignorant inexperienced boy, of an age

when the prospect of manhood, is productive of a puppyistical self-sufficiency, as disgusting as it is idle, to those of riper years. He has \$260 per annum, allowed him, to defray the expenses of his boarding, &c. Every morning before the breakfast hour, (eight o'clock) he examines those who complain of sickness, and prescribes for them according to their several and respective maladies:—maladies not actually discoverable by himself, but merely alledged to be existing by the convicts. He is often imposed upon by convicts, who wish to avoid work, and who complain of sickness, when they are in perfect health; and he endeavours to retaliate, by not admitting those, who are really sick, into the Hôpital, as some ungenerously believe, who are unwilling, to do him the justice, to ascribe any hardship of this kind, to his incapability of judging, and his actual want of discernment.

---The greatest imposition that I ever knew to be practised, with success, in the Hospital of the prison, was in the case of Smith, who, as appears, by a certificate, published in the public newspapers, signed by the Agent, was cured of the dropsy, by an obscure medical character, after he was declared *incurable* by the Attending Physicians; of whom there are always three, specially appointed to the prison. I am no physician, nor am I sufficiently acquainted with medicine, to say, if Smith ever had the dropsy at all; but this I do know, if the man himself is to be

believed, that when he was admitted to the Hospital, and passed the ordeal of a regular examination by the Visiting Physicians, he was as free from DROPSY, as any man breathing. He had been in the British Army—had learned all the subtlety of the soldiery—and was by no means indisposed, to use every art to rid himself of work. In common with the convicts, he fondly imagined that the agony of a death bed, or what appeared to be one, would be capable of exciting the sympathy of the Inspectors, and of procuring the speedy clemency of the executive, through the humane recommendation of the Physicians attending him. He accordingly procured some Castile soap, and mixing it with something else, the name of which has escaped my recollection, took it in small quantities, until it produced the appearance of a most desperate *Ascites*, which it did, in about three days, from the time he first took it. Three other convicts tried the same thing, with equal effect, and were admitted to the Hospital, almost at the same time. They, however, grew afraid of medical speculation, and their hydropical symptoms, very speedily disappeared. But, Smith was not to be intimidated. He had shrewdness enough to baffle the art and skill of the Attending Physicians, for several months, until experiment seemed vain, when they declared his disease, as entirely incurable. Pity mellowed their hearts for him—he had a desperate disease, which they had tried, in vain to cure.

—without assistance he would die in the prison—and they jointly promised to procure his liberation. He received his wine and his gin every day, and was indulged infinitely more, than any other man, however sick, in the prison. They *said*, that he had taken medicine enough to kill a regiment, and he *knew*, that he had never swallowed enough to convulse a midge. Just at this time, when preparations were making, to recommend him to the Governor for pardon, a medical stranger, declared himself able to remove any dropsy, no matter how desperate, or how long had been its standing. Things for a moment, like the celestial bodies, at the command of Joshua, stood still. Consultations were had—a variety of feeling was evinced—and the doctor was employed. His appearance at the prison, was a matter of curiosity. He had not the most attracting or prepossessing aspect, that ever fell to the lot of man; although his heart may have been as exalted in purity, as the hand that had moulded and fashioned it to life. The Physicians stood gaping around him, and fain would know the secret by which the cure would be effected. But he was silent, and they were ungratified. Smith took some portion of the Doctor's preparation—it was very strong of gin—and then desisted forever. He was shortly after CURED, *by his own consent*, and the Dropsy-Physician had the credit of it. The Attending Physicians were chagrined—the Agent gave a

certificate to the Physician, of the extraordinary cure, to be trumpeted to fame, through the medium of the newspapers:—and the dropsy patient, (who stood convicted of highway robbery, and was, consequently, sentenced for life) from the sympathy which his malady excited, among his Physicians and the Inspectors, was restored to liberty, after an imprisonment of a little less than Four years. Now this was “*playing* (what is vulgarly called) *the old soldier*,” with some effect. Attempts of the same kind, are certainly very frequent; but better would it be, that they *all* should be successful, than that the doors of the prison Hospital, should ever be barred; as I have frequently known them to be, against one poor, and miserable, and sick man; from either the pitiable ignorance of a Resident Physician, or his practised brutality, by the directions of a Keeper. If there were no other requisite, should it not, think you, reader, be necessary, that a Resident Physician, should be able to distinguish, between sickness and health—to tell whether a convict, complaining of illness, were actually ill or not? Is there an extravagance in the making of such a qualification necessary? I assuredly think not. I never think of the examination of a convict, complaining of sickness in the prison, without remembering the anecdote of Grogan, the Farrier. He was of acknowledged skill in his profession, and practised with distinguished success among the noblemen and

estimated gentlemen of both England and Ireland. He was somewhat eccentric—and was uniformly respected. One day he was taken very ill, at the house of a gentleman, living about five miles from the city of Dublin. A servant was despatched for an eminent physician, residing in the city, who immediately visited the patient. He felt the pulse of Grogan, and while relinquishing his hand, inadvertently asked him "*where he felt sick.*" Grogan eyed him contemptuously for a moment, when raising his voice to a pitch of perfect fury, he commanded him immediately to leave his presence. "A vagabond 'imposter!' said he, 'to ask me where I feel sick. 'Do I ever ask a *horse*, where *he* feels sick?'" Nothing could pacify him—the doctor left him—and it was necessary to send to Dublin, for another to attend him.—A physician should be able to tell expressly, by merely looking at a patient, *where he feels sick*; and no person should be appointed to visit or reside in, the prison, as a Physician, who had not perfectly arrived at that knowledge.

In almost all ages and countries, it has been customary to make the life of a convicted felon, a sort of plaything in the hands of a few speculating men. Among many of the ancients, convicts were immediately sold into an abominable slavery. The Romans, in the enlightened age of Tully, exposed them, as *gladiators*, to the horror of mutilation, in the celebration of the games. In modern days, and in one of the

most philanthropic nations of the globe, we find the first inoculation for the small pox, tried apathetically, upon them, and every other speculation, most unlimitedly tolerated. What wonder then, that at a more recent day of civilization, in our own country—in this very prison—that a poor convict should be subject to the speculation of an ignorant vagabond, who would purchase his knowledge, at the expense of sensibility, and by the horrid prostration of every feeling of the heart? What wonder that a poor convict, writhing in the agonies of death, from the effects of a maddening poison administered unto him, by the way of experiment—with the dæmons of inhumanity, holding their vigils at his bed posts, and upbraiding the tardy flight of his soul to eternity—with the icy fingers of death, sealing the life blood of his heart, and every thing, but sympathy, accompanying his torments—what wonder, I say, is it, that a convict in such a situation, and at such a moment, should lisp a curse on those who had barbarously poisoned him, and should carry such a curse, deep engraven upon his soul, for the confirmation of him, who had given it a being? What wonder that *Prussic Acid* and *Digitalis Purpurea*, are known in the prison, as the watch-words of death? O! is not this a subject for the pencil of humanity. O! is not this a theme for the Christian and Philanthropist. Is murder to be *legalized*, by the destitution of a convict? Are the ties of nature to be severed, be-

cause a man is not un wicked ? Is a convict to be murdered, and mutilated, and agonized with impunity, to *prepare* a beardless boy, for the practise of a profession, or to *perfect* a speculator, in the mysteries of Galen ? Shade of William Penn ! was this thy contemplation ? Spirit of the matchless HOWARD ! why slumberest thou in silence ?

The fewer the Hospital patients, the more money it puts into the pocket of the Contractor. He contracts, to furnish the Hospital with Medicine, Diet, &c., for a specific sum, not, in any event, to be increased nor diminished. It is important to him, that the Resident Physician, should be ductile, as wax, to his every interested and unfeeling suggestion ; and not be like Mr. Dow, or the lamented Mr. Van Zandt, independent in his conduct, and humane to every Convict. The Contractor intends to make money by his contract. Of little importance is it to him, how many poor dying creatures, are hurried into eternity, from the want of proper attention and nutriment, and from an undue desire, to promote his selfish views, in those who have the handling of his medicine, and the diet that he furnishes. He finds creatures who are willing to bend themselves to his interests : his purposes are served, and he is indifferent at whose expence.

The diet, of the Hospital, is very inferior to that which *should* be provided, for sick and suffering humanity. Few, but those who are confined to sick

beds, have any thing allowed them, but the common fare of the prison. The extra fare of the Hospital, which is supposed to afford an ample nutriment for the sick, is, in the *morning*, about a pint of *bad* Tea, sweetened with molasses, without any milk, and two slices of a baker's loaf of wheaten bread, about a quarter of an inch thick. At *dinner* the Convict is furnished with some particular luxury, such as damaged Rice and Molasses, or a tenuous slice, of some old rank wether, tough enough to challenge the strength of a Behemoth to masticate it and *One* delicate slice of bread. In the *evening*, the fare is the same as that of the morning.—All such luxuries are administered, through the Convict-Superintendent, to whom is committed the preparing and administering of the Medicines; and if a *delicacy* that the stomach of a dying man is craving, finds its way, through the Contractor to him, unwasted by handling; his rapacity lays it under immediate contribution—and what was intended most, especially for the *dying*, is made subject to the unfeeling voraciousness of the *living*. Between the avarice of the Contractor, and the rapacity of the Superintendent, the poor languishing Convict has but a poor chance, of being treated with humanity. When once he is stretched upon a low bed of sickness, a state of *convalescence* is a perfect wonder, and a *relapse* is certain, if not instantaneous death.—A desperate man, holding the situation of Superintendent, has an opportunity of por-

soning any sick Convict, confined to his bed, in the Hospital, whom in his wickedness of heart, he may purpose to destroy. McFeat, who died upbraiding a villian of a Superintendent with his murder, and several other cases, that could easily be named, bear irrefutable evidence of the fact. I firmly believe, that the villian (who has lately been sentenced, upon a *third* conviction, to the prison for Three Years in Solitary Confinement) during the time of his Apothecaryship, was the actual murderer of at least six convicts, who breathed their last in the prison. If he had been charged with either of the crimes, no direct malice could have been proved to have actuated him, and his excuse of *ignorance*, would have amply availed him :—" he had mistaken the medicine, intended to be given." The public would never have inquired into the business ; the murder would have been esteemed, an *accidental* homicide ; a *bad* man would be no longer, a charge, upon the public mind ; and from the villian's imprisonment, none would have taken the trouble, to investigate the matter. During my imprisonment, one Green was poisoned by the Superintendent—the Apothecary. It was discovered, and by timely applications, the effects of the poison were counteracted. The Superintendent, acting under the eye of the Resident Physician, excused himself by saying, that " he had mistaken the medicine." He was told to be more careful, and the matter ended. The ignorant Superintendent was not even displaced.

When a Convict dies, he is either *buried*, or delivered over to the Surgeons, for *dissection*, according to the season of the year. When he is *buried*, he is thrown, amongst a parcel of carpenter's shavings, in a white pine box, unplanned and unjointed, without the least ceremony, or the least commiseration, and conveyed to Potter's Field. During the cold weather, the dead convict's body, is given to the Surgeons, to be cut and carved and mutilated at pleasure ; and is doomed to the levity, of every apathetic coxcomb. It was a subject, upon which I always had the most serious reflections. The idea of death, at any time, has an imposing terror upon the mind. But situated as a Convict is, in the Hospital of this prison—with nothing but selfishness, and apathy, and inhumanity around him ;—with no friend to pillow his head, drooping beneath the anguish of disease ;—with no soothing voice of affection, to whisper consolation to him ;—with nothing to console, and every thing to grieve him ;—destitute of proper attention ;—made the play thing of a novice, to speculate upon at pleasure ;—denied the needed nutriment, to produce a convalescence ;—away from perhaps his dear wife, and much loved little children ;—his father and his mother, denied the liberty of seeing him ;—and the remembrance of his imprudence, or his wickedness, hourly chafing his woes :—to a Convict in such a situation, and at such a time, how much more *dreadful* is the agony, which

that terror creates ! And how much, must that agony be *augmented*, by the idea of being actually *speculated* out of existence, and by the unavoidable, prospect, of his brute-like treatment after death.— Titus, at his decease, requested to be placed, in a situation the most likely, to effect an immediate decomposition of his body, that the elements might, severally, claim and receive their own. The eccentric Diogenes, ordered himself to be flung out entirely unburied. “What, to the birds and wild beasts ?” said his friends ; “by no means sure,” said he ; “but lay my stick near me, that I may drive them away.” “How will you be able,” said they, “when you will not be sensible ?” “Not sensible ! “what harm then,” said he, “will the tearing of the “beasts do me ?”—But there are very few Convicts, indeed, who can exercise the philosophy of a Diogenes, or of a Titus, with respect to death. Were they even, naturally, possessed of equal greatness of soul, their sensibilities are too deeply affected, and their fortitude is too much destroyed, by the corrosive sublimate of affliction.

I never had the misfortune, but once during my confinement, to be a patient in the Hospital, and only then, for the space of two days. During that time, two Convicts expired their last, and were *boxed-up*, and carried away, for interment, in my presence. It was shocking to my feelings, to see the brutality and irreverence to the lowly dead. To see a couple

of fellows, with more than ruffian-violence, seizing the scarcely breathless body, and dragging it, upon the floor, to be deposited in its coffin; their eyes glistening with levity, and their lips pregnant with ridicule and blushless obscenity. The massy gates of the prison, that had shut the Convict from the world, in the very estimation of Convicts, had outlawed him from *pity*. Not a prayer was directed, for him, to the throne of Omnipotence; not a sigh of sorrow, was heaved, from any heart to his remembrance. As if *induration* had firmly sealed them to herself, not a death so unhappy could melt them into sympathy. It was a dreadful scene;—the aspect of levity, hanging over the pallid form of death. My heart sickened at the sight. O! what a host of abominations, I instantly beheld in the countenance of each of them.

“ If ever evil angel bore

“ The form of mortal, such they wore :

“ By all my hope of sins forgiven,

“ Their looks were not of earth nor heaven !”

In 1820, a Convict died in the Hospital, who was an object of my particular sympathy. He was a young man, of an elegant appearance; had received a classical education; and was destined, for the pulpit, by a very pious father. His vivacity and natural inclination to fashionable life, soon lured his mind from the grave study of divinity. He began to

dissipate—his father discarded him—that fretted his very soul—and he looked, deeply, into the bowl, for the pleasures of forgetfulness. He was naturally, a well disposed, and I thought, an amiable young man. But intoxication leads, always, to every thing disastrous. In one of his midnight revels, he got into bad company—sacrificed extravagantly to Bacchus—and somehow became involved in the perpetration of a crime, that doomed him to pass the remnant, of his short life; in the sequestered walks of this prison. I felt a real sorrow for his death. He was so intelligent—so affable—so every thing that is calculated to make us valuable to each other. From my natural reserve, and my peculiarly melancholy state of mind, I had but a slight acquaintance with him until a very short time before his death; which, by the bye, I have not unfrequently lamented.—In respect to his memory, the following was composed.

Peace to thy sleep, O ! B . . . . . lowly friend—  
 The green sod screens thee from thy cruel foes ;  
 Here all thy sorrows—frailties—have an end—  
 Here merge thy hopes—thy pleasures—all thy woes.

Tho' not a pall of honour, deck'd thy bier,  
 Nor friendship follow'd, gairishly, in pride ;  
 One heart respected—and soft pity's tear,  
 To worth like thine, shall never be denied.

No kindred mark'd thy last departing breath—  
 No wife mourn'd over thy unhappy doom—  
 No parent's hand, thy eye-lids clos'd in death—  
 A stranger carves HIC JACET o'er thy tomb.

In the midst of all the inhumanity of the prison, like a pyramid in the desert, surrounded by nothing but bleakness and ruin, there was *one* heart that still retained, all the grandeur—all the sincerity—all the elevated sympathy, of our nature. It is to Mr. John Gibson, the Deputy Keeper, that I allude. Upwards of Fifteen years have glided away, since he entered the prison as a Keeper. He has seen every odious picture, in the gallery of depravity ;-- he has taken the most sickening view of the character of man ;---and still he is sympathetic---still he is sensitive---still he is humane. With him, the mere stripedness or texture of a man's garment, makes but little difference ; he looks at the *heart*. Every *well meaning* convict, finds in *him* a valuable friend. He uniformly dislikes to see any such convict at the Hospital. I remember once to have heard him say, to a Hospital patient,---“ I never wish to see any “ man at this Hospital, that I would wish to see at liberty ;” and it struck me immediately, as forcibly as if he had said, “if you stay here you will *certainly* be murdered, and I cannot prevent it.” To a sick man he is uniformly attentive. How often have I known him to take, from his own domestic table, to the Hospital, nourishments and delicacies, for the suffering sick, just lingering, perhaps, on the verge of eternity, whilst all the other Keepers were gormandizing and guzzling, without a single thought of their suffering fellow man. Thrice

"blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." A bed of agony and destitution, is well calculated to shew the *sensibility* of a man's heart. There prostrated humanity, calls silently for *pity*; and hard, and cold, and indurated is the bosom, that refuses to extend to it. Mr. G. and myself were never very intimate; for I had too much skepticism about me, to rely with confidence upon his friendship, although I knew that it had nothing at all in it of the tyger. But, I always entertained a more exalted opinion of *his* humanity, than of any other person's, attached to the building. And I believe, he never thought me to be the *worst* man breathing in the world.

## PARDONS.

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Sincere *amendment* does away the crime,  
And *pardon* to the *contrite* heart is due.

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*Rickman.*

It is the object of criminal punishments, to exclude the offender from the walks of society, and to effect, if possible, a reformation in his morals. Whenever, therefore, the Inspectors recommend a convict for pardon to the executive, or his Excellency extends to him his clemency, there should be some satisfactory assurance, afforded to the community, that the convict is either a *reformed* man, or that he can be *safely* trusted to go at large. And, unless those to whom the business is entrusted by the community, are satisfied of one of these facts, there never should be an *effective* interposition, in behalf of any convict confined, until the expiration of his sentence, however wealthy or respectable his relatives or acquaintance. The non-observance of such a reasonable and necessary strictness, has been

generative of cunning and speculation, undermining and sapping the very foundation of our statutes, and giving vice, an opportunity of eluding the vengeance of the law. A convict now only ingratiates himself with some Inspector, or with some other officer of the prison, and though his heart be as black as villainy can make it, and his future views and intentions as desperate and sable, he soon becomes an object of individual commiseration, and his speedy liberation is rendered absolutely certain. Some convicts who are strangers in the State, and whose friends will not, or cannot intercede for their liberation, sit themselves quietly down, at their daily labour, and never dream of asking for their liberation, until a specific time arrives, which is understood among them, to entitle them to the exercise of the executive mercy. For example, one sentenced for more than Seven years, thinks himself entitled to mercy, when Four years confined; and one for less than Seven years, when one half of his sentence has expired. The Inspectors encourage and countenance the idea, and the convicts are not, in general, deceived in their calculations. No matter how desperate they may be, in the very knowledge of the Keepers and of the Inspectors, with a trifling importunity, and a promise of future rectitude, (that those to whom it is made, know well will not be kept) they are pardoned from their crimes, and are set again at liberty. Not long before my

liberation, I kept a list of the names of upwards of *Thirty* convicts, who were pardoned by the recommendation of the Inspectors, and were dismissed from the prison, during three successive days. To each name I affixed, from generally received report, and from their own declarations, a standard of character, by which their claims to mercy, were rightly to be estimated. I shewed this list to seven different Keepers, who concurred with me in opinion, and declared the standard to be correct. *Nineteen* of the number were the most dreadful villains breathing, and should rather have been doomed to the darkness of death, than ever have been permitted to shade the threshold of freedom. *Seven* of the nineteen, had been convicts in other prisons; *three* (or *four*) of them, were, at the time, imprisoned upon *second* convictions in the prison; *four* of them had been in the Penitentiary in New-York; and *three* of them were publicly known, to have been *Highwaymen* in Nova Scotia. Not a breath of contrition, had ever been gasped by them, during the period of their confinement. Not a sign of *reformation* was visible in their actions, even to the very optics of those who recommended them for pardon. In several of them, a disposition to conduct virtuously in society, had amply been tested:—they had been merely released from ignominious confinements, to relapse again into the paths of wickedness. Some of them have since been returned as convicts to the

prison, in the very teeth of the Inspectors' sagacity. The idea of being unable to judge of the intentions and the moral rectitude of any convict, is perfectly nonsensical. As long as men have opportunities of conversing together, and becoming intimate, they will be communicative ; and more especially, in a situation where there is a paucity of objects, for mental speculation, and where they have almost nothing to think of, but their single selves. In their conversations, a Keeper in his shop, or when he is creeping, snail-like, in his watches, may have an opportunity, of hearing their opinions, and, if he is not entirely stultified, may form some opinion of his own with respect to their morality. He hears and knows generally every thing that transpires in the prison ; for there are many convicts, who steal themselves slyly into the confidence of the Keeper, by informing upon their fellow convicts. Whatever a man says *against* himself, should be implicitly believed ; and if a convict of merely larceny, should confess himself guilty of other crimes, and exult (as they all generally do) in their perpetration and their magnitude, he should not be entitled so speedily to the executive mercy ; for if his assertions are *false*, he is guilty of an immorality in using them, destructive of the morals of those less experienced about him ; and if they are *true*, he should be punished for proclaiming his blushless depravity.

Pardons are too often abused, not to make it

a matter of moment to the community, that those who are the recipients of the executive favour, should be actually entitled to it. No convict ought to be pardoned, with whose entire character, the Inspectors are not perfectly acquainted. It is their duty, as I have before stated, to investigate every thing relative to a convict—his former course of life, his habits, his manners, his propensities and his vices, and to gather every circumstance, calculated to give them a correct idea of his character. The community expect this duty from them, and they should actively perform it. No convict ought to be pardoned, whose mere evenness of deportment, or half expired sentence, under the present regulation and system, would bespeak him a worthy object. And no convict should be deemed entitled to executive clemency, about whose future propriety, there should be a solitary doubt. I apprehend, if this were the case, an executive pardon would not, entirely, be construed, into a license to practice villianny ; nor would there be so many instances, of a repetition of crime.

His Excellency the Governor, wherever an application is made, by the *friends* of a Convict for his liberation, requires that the Petition should be signed by the Judge who tried, and the District Attorney who prosecuted him ; and when he has been imprisoned several months under his sentence, he requires a certificate from the Principal Keeper, as to

the general deportment of the Convict whilst in his custody. I regard the first requirement of the Executive as perfectly proper ; for it will very rarely happen, in the course of events, that both the Judge and District Attorney will be disposed in any case, to act with brutality ;—to withhold their assistance from the applying friends of a Convict, with a mere view to persecute him or protract his liberation. It would illly comport with that distinguished character, which they should invariably sustain, and which alone can produce in a virtuous community, a dignified elevation. A judicial officer, until he passes sentence upon a Convict, is the minister of justice ; but when the sentence of the law has escaped his rigid lips, the sword and the balance fall motionless from his hands, and he is instantly transformed into the dewy angel of mercy.—But the adoption of the second requisite, is certainly improper. In the first place, it is putting too much power into the hands of the Principal Keeper. When giving the required certificate, he feels himself in no wise constrained to verity, by any thing more than a mere naked moral obligation ; which by too many men, in the world, is entirely unregarded. He may, easily gratify any diabolical feeling that has possession of his heart ; as was the case, perhaps, with respect to *Thompson*, whom a certain Principal Keeper displaced from his Clerkship, in the prison, upon discovering an intrigue between him and his own daughter ;

and upon whom he swore (if report can be relied on) that the sun of liberty should never, never shine. For three years afterwards, His Excellency refused to pardon him, notwithstanding that application after application was repeatedly made to him, by his friends, and that he was strongly urged to do so, by the very Inspectors of the prison. Thus private feeling swayed public justice. The young man never sustained that *bad* character in the prison, which would have rendered him unworthy of the Executive clemency, in the estimation of a disinterested and humane Principal Keeper. He looked, as every elevated mind most naturally does, with unlimited indignation, upon the littleness, the ignorance and the brutality around him. Persecuted by the Assistant Keepers to gratify their *master*, and hated by the Convicts on account of his pride; he had too much uniform prudence to let the former shape his ruin—he had too much respect for his family, to let the latter debase him. Although every opportunity was sought ungenerously for the purpose, Thompson was never actually punished in the prison *after* the discovery of the amour; and the situation which he held most clearly shews, that he had not been punished *before*. There are two or three strange circumstances with respect to this case. Thompson's pardon was dated July 3—the Steamboats were plying between Albany (where the record of it is kept) and New-York—every other

pardon but *that*, could be received at the prison in two days, and the pardoned Convict be discharged—but Thompson was not discharged until the 14th, ELEVEN days after the pardon was granted. But there is another fact worthy of record. Thompson was discharged on the 14th and the Principal Keeper on the 19th of the same month;—so that the sun of liberty shone upon them both, almost at the same moment; but whether with equal radiance, is a matter of doubt. Secondly, the certificate when given is *inconclusive* evidence of the actual character of the Convict. The Convict may, *unmeritedly*, sustain a bad character, in the prison, from the persecution of his vagabond Keepers, as I have attempted to show under the head of “Internal Punishments.” Generally speaking, a deep and bloody minded villian has cunning enough to escape the punishments commonly inflicted in the prison,—while the poor, imprudent novice, with all that is sanguine in youth and excuseable in levity, is tortured with every thing disgusting and inhuman. The *villian* sustains a good character, according to prison report, and the artless and undepraved *novice*, a most desperately bad one. Where the clemency of the Constitution is exercised, it should be without fear, favour or affection. The cause of virtue, and the interests of morality most eminently require its *unbiased* exercise. Common sympathy should not be allowed to thwart the purposes of the law, and to defeat the designs both of

justice and of mercy. Nor should the Executive clemency be made to graduate, according to the barometer of a Principal Keeper's will, to the disappointment of those applying for a Pardon, and to the persecution of the Convict for whom the application is made.

I was pardoned in August, 1822, through the recommendation of some of the most influential and virtuous men in the City of New-York to the Inspectors, and through their recommendation to His Excellency the Governor. It was a dear moment of my existence. Had my soul been lapped in Elysium, I could not have realized a more elevated ecstasy. For three years and upwards, my heart had been broiling upon the embers of inhumanity. Agony had been my inseparable companion—tor-ture had racked every ligament of my soul—and now, the massy doors of my prison, my loathsome, agonizing prison, were to open for my deliverance. I was once more to embrace my wife—my aged mother—my little sisters—and respire with them all, the sacred air of liberty. I was once more to be with them;—they would soothe my sorrows and drive away my cares, and the domestic hearth would forever be the source of all my joys. The sigh of my regret would be stifled by their tenderness—and the wakened tear of disappointment would be dried by their caresses. O! what a train of soul enrapturing thoughts! If ever there was a soul im-

paradised upon earth, it certainly was mine. I could not check its flight—I cannot paint its feeling. The genius of sensibility, anticipated my dilemma. I penned the following lines during my last ten minutes at the prison. They are spiced with my feelings—and bear, perhaps, the trace of perfect mental disjunction, and of the unstudied rapidity with which they were written.

Grave of my freedom ! your portals dissever ;  
Tomb of my peace ! from your chambers I flee ;  
Cave of Trophonius !—I'm gladden'd forever ;  
Scene of despair ! soon you're distant to me.

Scenes of my anguish ! I leave you forever ;  
Fiends of my hatred ! a lasting adieu ;  
Dæmons of falsehood ! 'tis rapture to sever ;  
Minions of Satan ! ye never were true.

Minions of horror ! I turn from you ever ;  
Bed of Procrustes !—you'll torture me not ;  
Friends of my bosom ! I'll ne'er from you sever ;  
Kindred of love ! you shall ne'er be forgot.

Kindred of bliss ! O ! this moment's a treasure ;  
Vein of my heart ! see my freedom in view ;  
Pulse of my core ! I'm delirious with pleasure ;  
Wife of my soul !—now I'll live but for you.

The Inspectors consider themselves bound upon the liberation of a Convict by Pardon, to give him a

special word of advice, as to his future conduct and deportment. There may be some utility in the practice, of which I am unaware ; but I am at present inclined to believe, that however highly they may be respected as State Prison *fathers*, their wholesome advice is, in general, disregarded, by their *children*. Their advice may sometimes, and upon some Convicts, act powerfully enough ; but where did it ever shake the resolution of wickedness, or burn desperation from a single vicious heart ? Where did it ever reclaim vice, or aid or strengthen virtue ? Where and when did it agonize a Convict, until all but purity departed from his soul ? With respect to me, the Inspectors, with a pleasing sagacity, thought it expedient to dispense with the practice ; doing me, perhaps, the exalted honour and justice to believe, that not even their indubitable sageness could effect an alteration in my principles, or induce a deviation from my intended purposes. They were somewhat nettled at my conduct when leaving the prison. Some of them thought that I acted *cavalierly*, and their littleness was fretted into cruelty of heart. One of them declared, in the face of justice and of mercy, that " if the thing were to do again, I should not be liberated." O ! what an escape from brutality I had. The imputation of even incivility, could not, with truth, be made against me, and yet a monster would have pinched, with inhumanity, my heart. Regreting my felicity, he

would have racked me still with sorrow. He would have protracted a confinement, that even he himself, a few short days before, considered satisfactory, both in justice and in mercy, not because my conduct had been tinged with turpitude or blackened by crime, but because I acted cavalierly---because I felt and evinced a natural pride of heart, that would spurn into nothingness a petty reptile like himself; and because, forsooth, I had offended his consequence. God of heaven! is the pardoning attribute of the Constitution, to be a tennis-ball in the hand of littleness? Is the mercy of the law to be restrained in its progress, because a grovelling mind, has been disquieted? Reason forbid it. Pity condemns it. And the embers of shame are glowing, to consume the inhumanity.

At my liberation, I knew that the whirlwind of inhumanity, would howl ceaselessly around me: I knew that the breath of suspicion, would visit my fortunes roughly: I knew that I had just enemies enough, still unfortunately living, to make me, comparatively, wretched during life. But then the blessedness of being permitted to range the extensive fields of freedom---of being removed from a mansion that I loathed, and restored to a home that I loved---of meeting those whom duty and affection made invaluable, and chasing from their hearts, the sorry misery they had shared;---of proving to my friends, to my enemies and to the world, that, though

my ambition had been shaken, it could not be destroyed ;—these, these all conspired to elevate my heart, and to fortify its every ligament against hissing inhumanity. I felt myself entirely a stranger to depravity. Although my former puerility had stained the aspect of my virtue ; although I had been forced into a sink, of the most *infecting* corruption ; and although I had every thing—the loss of character, of profession and of friends—to tempt me in the sequel, to be most desperately a villian ; every fibre of my heart thrilled with agony and horror, at the name, or mention, or suggestion of crime. My thoughtlessness, alone, had desolated my fortunes : my errors had proceeded from my head, not my heart. And I felt an animating consciousness, that, in after life, no *virtuous* and *feeling* man, would impute to me, my agonizing affliction, as a disparagement or disqualification ; and that I should have discretion enough, to deem all others, too contemptible for notice.

The Inspectors, grasp at every opportunity of shewing a reformation in the convicts, through their immediate means. They state in their report, to the Legislature, that “ on the 24th of April, 1822, “ they placed boards in different parts of the prison “ yard, on which are sentences of admonition ; such “ as reminding the prisoner of the evil consequences of transgression, and the folly of being self “ tormentors ; which has operated powerfully upon

"the minds of many." And they "have the gratification to state, that sixty-eight convicts have been liberated since that date, (that is, up to the time of making the report, January 1, 1823) and *not one has returned.*" I take it that the inference to be drawn, from the language of the Inspectors, is, that the affixing of these "sentences of admonition," upon boards, stuck up in the prison yard has done one (or both) of two things, viz—either effected a *reformation* in sixty-eight convicts, who were subsequently liberated, or *deterred* them completely from the commission of crime. And as an *indirect* proof of this, they had "the gratification to state, that "*not one*" of the convicts liberated, "*had returned,*" previous to their report. Now, as I happened to be in prison at the period spoken of, and as I am one of the sixty-eight named, it may not be amiss for me to advert, for a moment, to those magical boards. When they were affixed in the prison yard, the convicts were perfectly surprised at the imbecility that had suggested them. Some of them most wittily paraphrased several of the inscriptions; many ridiculed and laughed them to scorn; and others openly pitied the impotency of the Inspectors. The levity of some pourtrayed them to be a facile means, under the Lancasterian plan of education, of imparting a knowledge of the *bible*, from which, they thought, most of the sentences were borrowed. They expected a new emission of

*sentences*, when a perfect knowledge of the given ones, had been attained by the convicts. There were many shrewd and witty purposes and ends ascribed to them, which, perhaps, never entered into the noddles of the Inspectors ; but not a convict, who could reason at all upon the subject, had the remotest idea of the effect, which they are represented to have produced. The contrary was every hour visible ; and not a convict but viewed them with unlimited contempt. I am one of the *Sixty-eight*, and I may, consequently, be allowed to state the effect, that they produced upon my mind. They told me nothing new. From my childhood—from the time that I was able to lisp the English alphabet—I always knew, “ the way of the transgressor to be hard.” And it was not reserved for the sagacity of the Inspectors, to inform me upon the subject, by the manufacturing of a biblical passage, or by the culling of a trite sentence from the Proverbs of Solomon. Before those boards, with their talismanic and wonder-working characters, ever at all meet my view ; I entertained for my own part, precisely the same ideas, with respect to crime, that I do at the present moment. The “ reminding” me “ of the evil consequences of transgression” has not “ operated” so “ powerfully” upon my “ mind,” as to deter or restrain me from the commission of crime. I hope that my principles of morality, are a little too refined, to re-

ceive, or to need, any elevation, from the wisdom of the Inspectors, or their biblical phraseology. In my opinion, a moral truth, already realized, can derive no factitious authority, even from the lips of the sapient Inspectors. They will, therefore, believe me to be an especial exception, to the result of their labours; the magical inscriptions upon their boards, having in no way operated upon me, as one of the Sixty-eight, in the manner that they would represent by inference to the public. With respect to the Sixty-seven other liberated convicts, I know nothing. But, I think, if the Inspectors will take the trouble to investigate the matter, that they will now find two thirds of the number immured in other prisons; which will partially account, for their not immediately returning into their tender custody, as the Inspectors, expected them speedily to do. To suppose for an instant, that such a *frivolity*, could work a reformation in *any* man, or could deter him from the commission of crime, appears to me, to indicate the greatest futility. If an imprisonment of two or three years, in a horrid den of misery, profligacy and corruption, can produce no effect, upon the mind of a *bad* man, is it to be believed, that the mere placing, upon boards of a few admonitory sentences in his view, would *operate* with the *powerful* effect, that the Inspectors intimate? *Credat Judæus appella, non ego.*

The measure that attaches the most value to a pardon, in the estimation of a bad man. and that

serves to affright him from the pursuit of vice, may certainly, be regarded as the most salutary and politic, for the immediate adoption of a virtuous community. Enough has already been said of the respect in which pardons are had, by *bad* men, under the present system. Something new should be devised, if punishments for depravity, are to have the wished-for effect. I think, that if a convict were placed immediately upon his conviction, into a Solitary Cell—shut out from all kind of social conversation and correspondence—kept upon the lowest diet, during his entire but short, sentence—not even his Keeper allowed to speak to him, but on necessary occasions—that he would estimate aright, the blessings of liberty, when restored to him by the executive pardon; and such pardon would *then* be esteemed an invaluable *charter* of liberty, instead of a *license*, to practice villianny, and to perpetrate crime.

## PRISON ACCOUNTS.

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O! what a specious, goodly garb and look  
Deceit can wear—the foul, the hellish fiend—  
The fattener on spoils.

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The accounts directed by the several acts of the Legislature to be furnished, should be explicit and clear, as well as consistent and true. They should not be *hastily* prepared, by the Convict-Clerks of the prison, nor *hastily* examined by the Inspectors and Agent, when they are so prepared. Predicated upon an *actual*, and not a *suppositious*, data, they should form an accurate and comprehensive view of the real state of the prison, not calculated to mislead, nor liable to deceive. The Inventories and Accounts of Sales should not be increased or diminished, to suit to the mind and views of the Agent, or any one else, the sum that the prison shall *purport* to have gained or lost during the year. The Convict-Clerks

should not be authorised to fix the sum, specifically, in which the prison shall fall in debt, either by adding to, or subtracting from, the accounts as kept within it ; as was the case in 1821, when the prison actually fell in debt, according to the *honest* mode of stating the accounts, in a sum exceeding \$9,800, which, by duplicity, was reduced to about \$4,600, and the papers furnished the Legislature corresponded with that sum. To make it more explicit, let us suppose a rough balancing of the prison accounts to have taken place, and that the general statement is lying before us. The sums must be entirely suppositions, their specific amounts having slipped my memory. Let it stand for examination thus :

## STATEMENT.

| <i>Dr.</i>                  |          |                              | <i>Cr.</i> |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------------------------|------------|
| To Inventories of 1820..... | \$50,000 | By Inventories of 1821.....  | \$53,000   |
| " Purchases in 1821.....    | 16,000   | " Sales ending in Oct. 1821. | 12,000     |
|                             |          | " Nett loss.....             | 1,000      |

Upon striking a balance, we find an actual *loss* to the State of \$1,000. Now, to change the gloomy aspect of a *loss* into the radiant visage of a *profit*, it is necessary only to do one, or both, of two things, viz. : to *increase* the several *Inventories* of 1821, or, to create a *credit* of a greater amount for *Sales*, during that year. Add, say \$2,000 to the *Inventories*, and there will then be a *profit* of \$1,000. Then give each of the *Factories* a credit for losses on goods sold under value, during the year, or for overcharges

in items *twice* debited to them, to the amount of \$900 more, and there will then stand upon the shewing most palpably and clearly, an actual profit of \$1,900 to the State. This was, precisely, the way that the prison accounts were adjusted in 1821. I was directed to make a *partial* or *rough* balance of the books, which I accordingly did. The loss, upon the rough balance, was beyond the expectations and wishes of the Agent's Clerk, and as I understood at the time, of the Agent. There was to be a diminution of the loss. The Brush and Turning Factories, two *losing* branches of the prison business, were to be credited for brushes, and chair stuffs *sold at reduced prices*, I believe to the amount of about \$900, which would give them the appearance of *profitable* instead of *losing* concerns; but these credits were not regularly authorized from actually deduced abatements in the prices of the articles sold, but merely lumped in the aggregate, and vamped upon the Factory accounts, to suit the crying emergency. The two items were specifically Journalized, and they were severally passed to the credit of the Factories, not at the time that the losses occurred in small and particularly specified sums, but in *gross*, at the expiration of the year, and at the very moment of closing its transactions for the information and inspection of the Legislature. The loss was still too great—it was beyond that of the previous year, and a further mitigation was destined to take place.

The Inventories were THEN discovered to be in some particulars deficient ;—the value specified of many articles was esteemed entirely too small ;—and the amounts were consequently advanced. A unit at the left hand of a *small* sum, soon transformed it into a *large* one. An understanding was indirectly given to me, of the amount in which it was supposed by the Agent, that the prison would fall in debt ; and I moulded the prison accounts, with the utmost nicety, to the satisfaction of his mind. One *opportune* over-charge, led me to another and another, which, when carried to the credit of the Factories in the *Sales* accounts of the prison, tended greatly to lessen the amount of actual loss.—The accounts are kept loosely—the Inspectors never examine them—and two selected Convict-Clerks do all the *posting* of the accounts of the prison, in their own way. The Agent relies on his Clerk, and his Clerk trusts to the Convicts, and thus the accounts are not overlooked. A parcel of charges to be made, are scattered about the prison Ledger, and often, erroneously, among the Factory accounts of the prison ; and in the sequel, the whole becomes a perfect mass of complication and confusion, which, neither the Inspectors, nor the Agent, nor his Clerk, can tell any thing about. Thus the system is bad. It should be so clear, that no perplexity could possibly arise ; or, if error should creep inperceptibly in, there should be some critically scrutinizing eye immediately to detect it.

The accounts ought also to be entirely overlooked, a little oftener than once a twelvemonth, by some or one of the officers of the prison. I should suppose that it would not be requiring too much of the Agent and his Clerk, to compel their personal attention to the Journalizing and Ledgerizing of the prison accounts. This takes place but once a month, and it would not be a special hardship. They would be occupied only two or three days ; and there would then be a degree of accuracy, in the general accounts, (if either of them understood any thing of Book-keeping,) which would amply compensate for their time and their trouble.—In the analysing of the accounts, where a Factory falls in *debt*, there should not be an erroneous credit given to it, in order to transform a Factory of *loss* into a Factory of *profit*, as was emphatically the case with the Brush and Turning Factories, in 1821. The proceeding *may* be honest enough, but it *does* appear to me that the creating, at a needed moment, of (to say the least of it) a *suppositious* credit, to suit a special purpose, like the one which I have named, has not the least semblance of verity or good faith. It is not that *necessary*, that *explicit*, that *correct* information which the several acts of the Legislature require, should be annually given, by the Inspectors and Agent. It is impossible for any one to know the *actual* state of the prison—the profit and loss concerns of the Factories—from the examining of such accounts.

To prove the general inaccuracy of the prison accounts, and the looseness with which they are kept, as well as the inattention of those to whom they are legally confided, it may be necessary to recur to the Sales accounts of 1821, and to observe the enormous sum for *errors*, which so handsomely bear therein the appellation of "*Overcharges*."—Referring then to the Journal of the prison, for the explanation of some of those *overcharges*, we find an item of \$ 1140 of one account, (Messrs. Blackwell & M'Farlin's;) about \$ 200 of another, (N. Comstock's) Thomas Hazard's, C. Trinder's and several others, of a large forgotten amount, which had, severally, been debited *twice* to the Factories, through the most gross and palpable inattention and ignorance. Such sums are not trifles, that might escape the observation of any man acquainted with his business, and not too indolent to perform it. These several sums are therefore credited to the Factories, and carried down in the prison accounts, in mitigation of the *real* sum, in which the prison had actually and honestly fallen in debt, during that year. There are, no doubt, a great number more of such inaccuracies existing in, and running through the prison accounts, which may, perhaps, be discovered at a needed moment, by some prying Convict Clerk, to vamp up a sum of overcharges operating as a set off, to the sinking debt of the prison. But there was one other *trifling* item, that was

excluded from the debit side of the prison accounts, at their annual adjustment, which would have given, if *included*, the prison, the honor of having fallen in debt, to the amount of about \$ 1100 more. This was Mr. Drake's bill for rations, delivered during the month of October, 1821, according to contract, to the convicts. He was settled with before the actual closing of the accounts, and in *honesty*, as his account came within the pale of that year's transactions, it should have been included in the general exhibit. But it was piously reserved for a next year's attention.—With respect to the Cash account of the prison, the Agent, who should know every thing about it, knows nothing at all. He himself once told me, “that there had always been a shade upon it, that he could not remove—a mystery in it, that he could not unravel—something about it that he could not comprehend.” And he particularly requested my attentive examination of it, from the time of his appointment, as Agent of the prison.—I did examine it: and a greater complication of incongruity and error, never graced the folio of any ledger in the world. It would have given me a month's trouble to have rectified it; and I felt wholly indisposed to make the attempt, or to whisper the result of my scrutiny to the Agent. Generally speaking, with respect to all those accounts, it requires, an intimate *local* knowledge, of the concerns of the prison, to discover their inaccuracy.

Book-keepers of eminence, from the dubiousness of the Agent, have frequently been called upon, to examine the accounts ; but the want of that *local* knowledge, entirely prevented them from discovering the defects and inaccuracies, lingering in and about them. Had they merely been touched, with the wand of *local* knowledge, (a knowledge that can be attained in very little short of six months) the "*shade*" and "*mystery*" of the Agent had entirely disappeared. As a proof of this, with respect to the Factory accounts, as I have stated them to be, let us instance the case before us, of Blackwell & M'Farlin. Suppose that a stranger had been examining the books ; he would have there found "SUNDRY MANUFACTURES," made debtor to *Blackwell & M'Farlin*, and that firm credited to the amount of \$1140. In a few months after, he would have found "SUNDRY MANUFACTURES," made debtor to "BILLS PAYABLE," to the amount of \$1140, for iron, &c. had for the prison Factories ; and "BILLS PAYABLE," consequently credited ; and the account of "BILLS PAYABLE," upon the falling due of that note, properly *closed*, by being made debtor to "CASH" for the same amount. Thus "SUNDRY MANUFACTURES," would have been debited, with the same account *twice* ; and Blackwell & M'Farlin's account would have been actually *open*, when it should have been *closed*. Now, to a stranger, the sum of \$1140 would, abstract from

the subsequent transaction, in relation to the note, appear to be due to Messrs. Blackwell & M'Farlin. *Local* knowledge could alone have enabled him to discover and correct the error. For how could he divine, that such an act of stupidity, had obtained a place, and had secreted itself in the folio of a Ledger, that should be accuracy itself? How could he imagine, that accounts supposed to be kept, under the very eye of an intelligent and skilful Agent, could be so *grossly* incorrect?

As I have stated the accounts to have been adjusted in 1821, they were also adjusted in 1822; with this grosser addition: A Convict Clerk took the Inventories himself, and between him and the Agent and his Clerk, they fashioned the prison debt in their better skill. In my adjustment of the prison debt, I made it amount to almost \$5000; in their better judgment, it only amounted to \$351.41. The Convict Clerk, who took the Inventories, made the prison, however, at first, upon the rough balance, appear to have *gained* a sum exceeding \$9000. The gain appeared too rapid from the preceding year, and it was diminished in the wisdom of the Agent; for then he could perceive most palpably and clearly, that the Inventories were overcharged. It is, certainly, a pleasant thing, to have such accommodating accounts:—to have a fixed rule, by which the prison can be made to appear to the world, to be either a *gaining* or *losing* con-

cern, in the wisdom and will of its sagacious guardians. To have an Inventory of trash, that the Clerk says, would, if sold, bring a little more than \$5000, rising and falling to the tune of \$76,000, whenever occasion requires it. But this has grown so fixedly into an abuse—the public mind has so often in this way been deceived—that no tint of even impropriety attaches itself to the practice—no care nor trouble is taken to have the Inventories correct. In former days, the Inventories were taken throughout the prison, by the Keepers of the respective shops, &c., and handed by them to the Agent. Now, the edge of iniquity is worn off, and a Convict-Clerk is directed to perform the duty. In a short time, perhaps, even that will be dispensed with, and like many other things of the prison, it will merely be *supposed* to be done.—But, in the making out of the Inventory of 1822, I would humbly ask, was there or was there not, a large quantity of CHAIR STUFFS omitted? Were not the GAS WORKS, amounting, as per last Inventory, to upwards of Three hundred Dollars, omitted? Were there not several MACHINES, of different kinds, omitted to be inserted? And were there not *many* articles wilfully omitted, because the Inventories were of a sufficiently large amount?

I have, in a previous part of this work, stated that the *Cash* and *Sales* books are kept by the Agent's Clerk, who at the expiration of every month, hands

them to the Convict-Clerks to perform the prison postings. I have also stated, that such Convict-Clerks might omit to *debit* or *credit*, any item whatever, without its being discovered by the Agent or his Clerk, from their entire want of attention. When the Convicts would have the villianny to alter the *Cash Book* of the prison, what would they not do? And what would not escape the observation of the Agent and his Clerk, when their very *Cash Book* could be altered without their discovering it?—I myself discovered THIRTEEN different alterations in the *Cash Book* that had been made by Convict-Clerks who had preceded me in that office. The Agent's Clerk was consternation itself—he could not believe it—but the facts were too glaring to be doubted in the least. I was requested to be silent on the subject.—Now, specifically, with respect to these alterations. The Convicts often take money with them into the prison; sometimes a mere trifle. This money the Agent, in virtue of his situation, receives, enters in the *Cash Book* of the prison, and passes to the credit of the Convict in a petty Ledger kept for the purpose. When liberated, such money (if undrawn from the hands of the Agent) is paid over to the Convict, upon his giving a receipt for it, which is mingled of course with the vouchers of the prison. This amount may be enhanced in the *Cash Book* and Petty Ledger aforesaid, as it was in the Thirteen cases I have named, by the mere an-

nexation to it of a unit or a cypher. Suppose, for example, that the amount credited to a Convict was \$2.90 (as was exactly in one instance, the fact) by putting the figure 1 at the left hand of the 2, it would be transformed into \$12.90, and the State would be allowed to have the honor of paying \$10 to a Convict, beyond what had been received of him, through the instrumentality of a villianous Convict-Clerk, selected to assist the Agent and his Clerk in the discharge of their duties. Such \$10 would, in itself, be a *trifle*. But, let such an alteration be made, in Thirteen different instances, (as by a mere *superficial* examination, it was found to have been) and never to a sum less than \$9, and in some cases to the amount of \$30, and they then appear to be a matter of some little moment. The amount that has been drawn in this way, from the public Treasury is unknown, and may be considerable. A regular examination of the prison accounts alone can determine it.—The account of "PRISONER'S MONEY" should be adjusted; and those accounts that have improperly been standing open, in the Petty Ledger of "*Prisoner's money*," for a number of years, should be fully closed. Where monies are remaining in the hands of the Agent, unclaimed by the heirs of deceased Convicts, as is the case with Robinson, and a host of others, should it not be paid over into the Treasury of the State, instead of being kept in the hands of the Agent? Where a

Convict has placed money in the hands of the Agent, should he not be allowed to draw it, whenever he thinks proper, without being prohibited by the Inspectors, Agent, or any one else, who may wish to have the use and benefit of Two or Three hundred Dollars, during the time of his confinement? Does the Agent ever put a Convict's money out to interest, during his imprisonment? Or does he ever himself allow a Convict any thing for *his* use of it? Why not allow the poor Convict interest on *his* money, as well as to allow an Inspector interest on a note for Leather purchased several years since, and which, strange as it may seem, has not yet been paid? The Inspectors and Agent refuse to let the Convict dispose of his own money, and yet not a cent of interest is allowed him. In one case, for two years, the Agent had the benefit of Twelve hundred Dollars, and for what I know, drew, himself, the interest of it, which, at 6 per cent, would have amounted to \$144; a sum not to be rejected as a trifle by a Convict, just liberated from a miserable prison. In another, he now holds in his hands and has done so, for the last two years, \$240, which he will not allow the owning Convict to draw, nor will he allow him a fraction of interest for the use of it. If this conduct comes within the pale of justice, I am at a loss to understand in what justice consists.

There is *balance* upon the face of the Cash account of \$18,000 and upwards. Will the Agent be

pleased to satisfy the public with respect to that sum? How did it accumulate? Is it a surplus of monies in his hands which he actually owes to the State? Or is it owing from the State's Treasury to the Prison? Or from the Prison to the Treasury? Why has it been transferred, backwards and forwards, from the debit to the credit, and from the credit to the debit side of the Cash account in the prison Ledger? Or does he know any thing about it?

I would humbly suggest the expediency of a critical examination into the affairs of the prison. Let three Commissioners be appointed by the Legislature to investigate all and every thing with respect to the business; authorize them to compel the attendance before them of all and every person or persons; to issue Subpœna's *duces tecum*; and to take the examination, upon oath, of all and every person whom they may think necessary to their explicit information; directing them to take an Inventory of all and every the goods in the prison, under the appraisement of *three* judicious citizens, to be specially selected, and who shall in no wise be interested in, or have an agency in, any thing connected with the prison, or be of *kin* to any of its officers; and upon the obtaining of all and every such information, to transmit the same to the Legislature for its better information. In this way, a developement will be made officially to the public, which otherwise must

slumber entirely concealed.—Without this, the prison defects are entirely undiscoverable. Without this, the public must continue to be deceived. Without this, the public money must still continue to be squandered.—Public justice requires the investigation; and it cannot but be hoped that it will speedily take place.—O ! that I could have ready access to those books. I would put a tongue in every folio of the Ledger, that would silence and agonize many a creature in existence. I would surround the Inspectors, and Agent, and others, with such damning facts, that, like the Scorpion in a circle of flame, they would sting themselves to death.

## CONCLUSION.

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—— I hate you all—  
Both the *great* vulgar, and the *small*.

Cowley.

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In compiling the preceding pages, I have had but little ambition to please, either Officer or Convict; for disregarding the smile and the frown of either of them, I have written only for honest, humane and disinterested hearts. If *money* had been my only inducement for writing; if my virtue had grasped the hand that would have bribed me into silence; or if *villainy* could have lured me from the path of rectitude and duty; not a page of this production, would have met the public eye. I know that *persecution* will ceaselessly pursue me. It has already reared its baleful head—it menaces me with ruin—but it cannot affright or divert me from my purpose. I know that treachery is akin to malice; and that insidious attacks will repeatedly be made

upon me ; but while I have virtue for my cuirass and prudence for my shield, I shall ever be invulnerable, and will laugh their efforts to scorn.

It is true, that I have very little to apprehend from the malignity of those who are, or have been, *Convicts* in the prison. They would as soon think of approaching the predacious tyger in his walks, as of addressing me, upon any subject whatsoever. I have more to apprehend from other *creatures*, than from them. I have before me, while writing, the names of 483 *intimates*, or *friends*, or *relatives* of those, who will consider themselves, perhaps, concerned in the publication of these pages ; and who will, of course, be my deadly enemies. But my duty to the public shall not be unperformed.

I think that the *wisest* of the *gentlemen*, whom I have been compelled to speak of, in the course of this work, will most especially thank me for the attention. Without my aid, they might naturally have despaired of attaining any character among men ; and, like the Ephesian incendiary, they are impressed with the belief, that it is better to sustain a *bad* character, than to have *no* character *at all*. Thus far, I shall, undoubtedly, have benefitted them individually, by this publication ; even though the shield of every virtuous citizen, should be hurled upon them, in the porch of their treason, their inhumanity and their guilt.

My relatives, my friends and my enemies, may be

assured, that, from this time, whenever I shall grow weary of my life, I shall always know where to fly into the embraces of death. Where, instead of expiring upon the scaffold, a horrid spectacle for the multitude, or imbruing my own hands in the life blood of my heart, I shall have myriads of executioners, who will kindly murder me *by inches*, and who will chuckle at the groan which their barbarity occasions. And where, instead of being cheered in my advesperating moments, by some orison of devotion, and some song of piety, as the eyelid of life, shall be shutting the world from my vision, my requiem will be chanted by the fiends of earthly discord; and the last words of each stanza, that shall be visited upon my dying ear, in voices as dulcet as the melody of Rhodope, will be—**INSIDE OUT**; and **ECHO**, catching the concluding lines of the song,—

Shall audibly murmur, the dæmon-like shout,  
He dared to unveil us—he wrote **INSIDE OUT**.



## APPENDIX.

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*As it may be interesting to some readers to peruse the history of a few of the Convicts, I have thrown together biographical sketches of several of them, in the succeeding pages. A due respect for the feelings of their families, their relatives, and their friends, compels me to give them fictitious names.*

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### EZEKIEL WADLER,

Was born in Vermont. His father was a respectable farmer, in easy circumstances. He paid a considerable attention to the rearing of his children, and particularly gave Ezekiel, a good mercantile education. At the age of eighteen, he was placed as a Clerk, in a country store, under the direction of an expert, active man, with whom his father had associated himself in business, specially for the purpose. A year of strict propriety transpired after his induction to his situation, before he went into any sort of fascinating company. His youthful habits, until then, were entirely domestic. About this time, he was invited to a ball; and became acquainted with several young people. Subsequent intercourse made them familiar, and, although he was prohibit-

ed, from going out after night-fall, or after the store was closed, yet he pretended sometimes to go to bed, and slipt slyly from the house to his youthful companions. He had no cares, no anxieties, no troubles. The eluding of parental vigilance was esteemed by him, as it is too frequently by children, where it pinches their desires, a *venial* imprudence; and every thing around him was pleasantness and peace. —But he was now destined to immediate discontent: a new scene was in preparation for his eye. He had become attached to a young and amiable maiden, in the vicinity of his father's, and on her part there was a reciprocity of feeling. Their intimacy was known, and it was immediately discountenanced by his father and his friends. He was forbidden to speak to her on any occasion whatever: her only fault being the *poverty* of her parents. This struck the mind of Ezekiel, as a piece of the utmost ill nature. She had a prepossessing appearance, a suavity of disposition, and a goodness of heart, which conspired to enchain him immoveably to her. There was nothing about her that could be construed or tortured into evil; and her crime, her fault, in the estimation of those around him, was only her *poverty*. For this he was prohibited, ever again from seeing her. Her parents became apprised of the prohibition, and in their turn they imposed a like restraint upon their daughter. The parents of both immediately became enemies. Slander was afloat in all and every direction. The young people were all chuckling at the fettered love of the tender pair. But in them both, there was a changeless—an immovable affection. Breaking through the parental constraint put upon them, they stole silently, from their respective domes, night after night, while their parents were in slumber, to hold their sweet communion, in a contiguous parterre. The prohi-

bition was esteemed by them, as originating in mal-  
evolence, and their ardency of affection *increased*,  
rather than *diminished*. The cold and apathetic  
feelings of satiated love, and the prohibition which  
that satiety had ungenerously produced, were scorn-  
ed, rather than respected. The hours glided rap-  
tulously away: their kiss was furtive, and was, con-  
sequently, the sweeter: their delights were stolen,  
and they were much the more refined. At the  
very acme of their felicity, when repetition had  
wasted away the primitive aspect of their impru-  
dence, they were suspected, and their actions were  
watched. The father watched his daughter—fol-  
lowed her to the place of assignation—saw the  
lovers meet—heard much of their conversation,  
discovered himself to them, to their complete con-  
fusion, and swore determined vengeance upon them  
both. He departed home with his daughter—he  
confined her to her room—menaced her with every  
thing brutal and horrible—and, finally, prevailed  
upon her to swear an actual Rape against Ezekiel.  
The magistrates were brought—the information  
was lodged—a warrant was issued—and Ezekiel  
was arrested. An expose of their secret amour  
took place—the father of Ezekiel, discarded him  
for his disobedience—he was thrust into a prison,  
with three suspected felons, and so was kept con-  
fined until the sitting of the Court, a period of three  
months. Matilda (for that was her name) was kept  
under a lasting restraint, and was seldom left to her-  
self. She had no means of getting a syllable to  
Ezekiel. She felt herself the cause of his misery.  
The hour approached when he was to be put upon  
his trial—public curiosity was excited—expectation  
was on tiptoe—and the sneer of volatility, awaited  
the confronting of the lovers. He was put to the  
bar;—but where was she?—the only witness

against him, where was she? Did she robe herself in the habiliments of sorrow, and mingle with the curious crowd? Did she await with feverish anxiety the arrival of the moment, when she might draw down the lightning of the law, upon the reputed spoiler of her innocence? No!—his accusers were absent:—the father, the mother, the daughter—all were absent. An officer was despatched from the Court, for the prosecutrix. She breathed her last, as he entered her habitation. She had committed suicide. In her bosom was found a note, addressed by her own hand, to Ezekiel. It was taken upon the wings of anxiety, to the dock in which he was standing. In the presence of a gaping multitude, it was handed to him. He opened it, and bursting into tears, delivered it over to the Court. It was read in open Court, in the following words—

DEAR EZEKIEL,

I am no more. I have ruined you—I have destroyed myself. I was forced to a *perjury*, involving you in misery, through the brutality of my father. We could never be happy—and I have fled from wretchedness. You alone were identified with the hopes of my life: you were present to my soul, in the agonies of death. My dear Ezekiel, forgive my father and family, for the sake of your  
MATILDA.

The public indignation was excited: Ezekiel and Matilda were pitted: their persecutors were execrated; Ezekiel was discharged. The fate of Matilda wrapped an interest around the scene, that engaged the attention of every sympathetic heart. But his father would admit of no excuse for his disobedience. He forbid him his house, and Ezekiel went to Canada. Vice had lost its odious aspect to his mind, by his intercourse and familiarity, with its detestable votaries, with whom he had associated,

during his unmerited confinement. The stream of virtue, had become somewhat turbid in his soul. In Montreal, he obtained a situation in a store, with a very small compensation. Not a long time had transpired, when it was discovered that he had embezzled \$129, belonging to his employer. He was put into prison—a part of the money was restored—his employer pitied him—and he was liberated. He became acquainted in the prison, with a couple of well dressed, but desperate villians, who were departing for New-York, at the time of his liberation, and who offered to defray the expenses of the journey, if he would bear them company. The proposition was very advantageous to him, in his destitute situation. He embraced the opportunity which it afforded, and they all departed. On their way, they initiated him into the mystery of swindling at cards. He was apt, and learnt very quick. They occasionally passed a Counterfeit Bill, but he was a stranger to it. He understood them to be *Sportsmen*, (the slang name for *Gamblers*), but not to be *Thieves* or *Counterfeiters*. They arrived, however, in New-York, after a three weeks journey, and put up at the Union Hotel. He sought a situation, but could not obtain it. His companions grew low in pocket—and he had not a cent in the world. He was in debt—his Landlord was pressing him for money—he knew not what to do. They suggested to him the probability of being able to extort a sum of money, from Mrs. S——, a respectable lady, living in Broadway, in the City, by an anonymous letter, menacing her house with desolation by burning, if she refused or omitted to leave a specified sum of money, at a particular hour, under a pile of boards, in the upper part of the City. He was to be kept out of view : he was merely to write the letter. It was done. Mrs. S—— was

alarmed, and took the menacing letter to the Police Office. The Magistrates advised her to go to the designated place, and leave, or apparently leave a small sum, and depart; while their officers would secrete themselves in the full view of it, and seize the villian who should remove it. The hour approached--the Officers were stationed---Wadler and his companions were in waiting---and Mrs. S--- neared the pile of boards. They all saw her. And upon her departing, Wadler was desired to go and get what she had left. He advanced; and in the act of removing it, he was seized by the waiting Officers. He confessed his guilt, and discovered upon his accomplices. They were tried and sentenced to the Bridewell, (I believe) for one year.

From the time of his arrest for the rape, up to this time, he had never seen his father, nor any of his family. He felt indignant at their conduct towards him: he attributed his melancholy situation, to the apathy of his parent. The shade of Matilda haunted him; his felicity was centred in her; his father knew it; and yet he interposed his parental hand, between him and his love, and destroyed them both---irremediably, destroyed them. He once had a home---was virtuous, was happy. He had been thrown upon the world destitute and friendless---with no means of acquiring a living; and at a period when his inexperience subjected him, to the successful assaults of vice. Necessity had compelled him to an act, whose enormity was not a little enhanced, by its being directed against an unprotected and aged female. He had a full current of horrible reflections, as he was passing from the Court to the Bridewell, when at its very gate he met the eye of his father. They looked at each other for a moment, when the father said with the utmost asperity, "O! you villian," to which he replied, "I am

sir, a villain, but you have made me so ;" and he passed into the prison. He was placed with four convicted felons, in a room in the Bridewell. They grew very intimate, and conversed freely. Remorse had left him. It mattered little to him, what he did, or where he was. He had no character to lose : he had no inducement to acquire one. Wherever he looked, bleakness and ruin were present to him. His resolutions became horribly desperate, and by the time of his liberation, he was fit for almost any thing debasing to man. When the hour arrived, he was discharged, without money, his clothes ragged and dirty, and without any means of acquiring the articles necessary, not only to the decency of his appearance, but to his actual comfort. He loitered about during the day, and at about eight o'clock in the evening, in the outskirts of the city, he knocked down a well dressed man, stripped him of every thing but his stockings, and departed ; leaving his old greasy hat and threadbare coat, in his humanity, to the sufferer. He found himself in the possession of £65, besides an elegant suit of clothes.—He shortly after procured some Counterfeit money, and had passed away about £200 of it, when he was detected. His usual way was ; to go into a Grocery or other Store, and buy with his spurious money, any thing that was exposed or intended for sale, that might chance to meet his eye.—Departing with it, if it was useless to him, he usually gave it to the first child that he met in the street. But one unlucky night, he passed a \$10 Counterfeit Bill, for some sugar and candles, which he immediately threw into the street, upon his leaving the store. After his departure, the Counterfeit was discovered—he was followed—was apprehended—was searched, and five Counterfeit \$10 Bills were found secreted in the cuff of his coat. He

was, subsequently, tried and sentenced to a Ten years imprisonment, in the New-York State Prison. Here he was perfectly at home. He hated every thing that had the least appearance of virtue. His mind was attuned to nothing but the discord of vice. Religion was his mockery—piety his scoff—morality his scorn. After an imprisonment of Four years, he was pardoned, and left the prison gate, with the avowed intention of *murdering* his father. Horrid, horrid, villian !!!

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### DAVID SWITH

Was born in the City of New-York. His father died when he was but Nine Years of age. At the age of 14, he was apprenticed to a Tailor. He had been taught to read and write tolerably well before he was put to his trade. His master suffered him to run about the streets among the boys, after night-fall; and David often experienced severely the want of a little money. His master would give him none, and his mother was too poor to afford it. In common with vagabond boys, with whom the City of New-York is particularly infested, he was continually fighting and quarrelling. But one night, as he was prowling about, in quest of some adventure, and abusing every passenger in the street, he unfortunately insulted an elderly lady, in the most gross and indelicate manner, and in the act of passing along, he was collared by the Watchman, and lodged in the Watch-house. For this he was tried, and sentenced to the Bridewell for the term of Two months. And here commenced his career of infamy. He was placed at his sentence in a room with several convicted and desperate *felons*, with whom he soon be-

came intimate. At that time, he had not the smallest idea of perpetrating crime—his wickedness was incidental to boyhood—and *theft* was an object to him of the most startling horror. Before his liberation, however, the lessons of the experienced, had greatly warped his mind from the rigid principles of virtue. The fact of having been confined in the Bridewell, he thought had destroyed, irremediably, his character. He felt ashamed of his conduct, and would not go home. And accordingly, at the expiration of his sentence, by the advice of one of his room-mates, whose sentence expired in about a week after his own, and with whom he had promised to associate, he went to board in a bawdy-house in George's (now Market) Street, in New-York, without visiting his mother, his master, or any of his former friends. In this house, he became the paramour of a profligate and abandoned woman, with whom he lived for about a month. He, occasionally supported her, she occasionally supported him; he, by petty pilfering, which, want of money compelled him to; she, by the lowest and most disgusting venality.—But, his expected companion had “brushed the scene” without him. The honey moon of his new vocation was just waning, when he was detected in a *theft*, and again committed to the Bridewell. He was tried—convicted of Petit Larceny—and was sentenced to be whipped Twenty-one lashes. He was whipped, publicly, in the Bridewell-Yard, in the presence of his mother, a younger brother, and several of his relatives. If he had any horror before, at the thought of crime, it had departed entirely from his mind. He was now most certainly, degraded *forever*; and that too in the very face of his home and of his nearest connections. Gladly would he have wiped away every trace of his guilt, and of his infamy; gladly would

he have relapsed into the walks of his former innocence ; and gladly would he have returned to the shop-board of his master, and fastened himself immoveably to the pursuit of industry and virtue.— But he had waded too far in guilt. He was degraded ; he was despised. And it appeared to him easier to pursue his career of guilt, than to return to the paths of virtue. The finger of scorn would point at him through life, however virtuous might be his actions ; and the hissing of the unfeeling would follow his footsteps forever. He was entirely without money—without a solitary friend. At this moment, he accidentally met one of his *Bridewell* friends, who supplied his immediate wants. They boarded together, and were constant companions. During the first two or three days of their intimacy, he was determined to go to work, and he accordingly strove though in vain, to obtain it. He began to forget his recent punishment. His associate was continually dissipating his regrets, for the loss of character and friends, by the glittering prospect of an immediate accumulation of wealth ; and intercourse created a confidence between them, which for a time, inseparably united their interests. Virtue, that in his heart had been struggling for an ascendancy, gave her last convulsive, agonizing gasp, and fled from him forever. The horrid empire of vice was established ; and his subsequent actions were moulded to her suggestions.—The first depredation of their copartnership, was the rifling of the Roman Catholic Chapel, which they entered through one of its windows. The companion of Swith had long designed the attempt upon this sacred institution, and was the first who entered its window. They begun, immediately, to rifle it of its chalices, of its basins, of the ornaments of its vestments, and of other valuables consecrated to the service of the Catholic

Church. In their sacrilegious rummage, they found the image of our blessed Saviour, and dropping most of their less valuable plunder, departed undiscovered with it, for their home; which was not far distant. They slept not. Guilt drove all but wakefulness from their eye-lids. The minister of horror seemed to be watching over their reflections. They were in an unceasing intellectual ferment; until the morning began to dawn, when they arose, and went to work to mutilate and malleate their valuable booty. All the world was sleeping. But the eye of heaven was upon them. The darkness might cover their wickedness from the eye of mortality, but there was an eye that could pierce the deepest veil of tenebrosity, and that could not be shut out from the view of their depravity. They accomplished partially their work, and secreted the disshapen mass, to be disposed of the very first opportunity. But—what transpired at the Chapel? 'Twas six o'clock—and the matin mass drew many from their slumbers to the temple of sanctity. The pious were shocked—the devout were petrified:—the shrine of purity had been violated. Some fiend had robbed the Chapel—the image of the adorable Saviour had been stolen—the dæmon of desolation had polluted the sanctuary of God. Consternation filled every soul—women and children were weeping—and the perpetrators were witnesses of the effect of their villianny. But—there was a vengeance in store for them, whose visitation was inevitable. The guardian angel of Christianity had not slumbered on her post. In the precipitation of the moment, they had forgotten an axe, which they found in the house where they resided, and which they had taken with them to aid them in their villianny. They had raised the sash of the window with it, and had left it in the cemetery surrounding the Chapel. Curiosity was

awakened;—the crowd was multiplying;—and all were examining the *guilt-discovering* axe. A little boy remembered it—its owner was traced—but it had been lent the day preceding to the proprietor of the house in which the sacrilegious thieves resided. He had used it, when he went to bed, to fasten the back door of his house, and had left it in the hall. There were no males slept in the house that night, but the two thieves, who were not of his own family. The premises were searched—the suspected were examined—but nothing yet transpired. The thieves had gone to bed very early in the evening; but, it was only to await the retiring of their host, whose knowledge of their being in bed, they cunningly thought, might greatly aid them in case of being suspected. But---they were seen to depart from their lodgings at a very late hour, by a neighbour, who had just returned home. They were suspected and arrested. A search was again made of the premises, and the battered and shapeless mass was discovered. But still the chain of evidence was incomplete. There was enough to create suspicion, but nothing to confirm guilt. Villianny had a short-lived expectation of escaping. But Heaven never does its work by halves.—A mother who had been at her vigils over the diseased frame of a much loved child, had seen the thieves in the very act of disfiguring and malleating their plunder. She knew Swith perfectly: she had known him from his childhood.—He and his accomplice were committed for trial; their guilt was established; and they were severally doomed to the lenient punishment of imprisonment in the State Prison, for the space of seven years. Swith was pardoned after an imprisonment of four years, and restored to the walks of social life. His accomplice died in the prison.

To one unacquainted with the general tenor of a bad

man's life, it may appear strange; after all his punishment, that Swith should still persevere in his nefarious practices. Yet so it is: when you once divest a man of his character—expose him to infamy—and sever all those ties which endear him to life, he becomes immediately capable of every thing debasing, disgusting and desperate. The progress of Swith, in vice, had been gradual, though certain. He had learnt its rudiments in the Juvenile Seminary, the *Bridewell*; he had been scourged for his ignorance, at the *Whipping-Post*, and he applied himself more closely;—and after a four years *pupilage* in the College, (the State Prison,) he regularly graduated a *first-rate* scholar.

From a proficient, whose last attempt at villianny was by profaning the house of God, and sacrilegiously rifling it of the image of our Saviour, and who had no remorse to mollify his soul, what could be expected but a uniform depravity? TIME, that ought to have brought contrition, but perfected him in guilt. Upon his dismissal, he went to Philadelphia, where, shortly after his arrival, he was detected in the very act of picking the pocket-book from the pocket of a citizen, and was sentenced to the Penitentiary for the term of 18 months. His term of sentence expired and he returned to New-York.

We next find him furnishing his own house, by the unfurnishing of a widow-woman's living on Staten-Island; his kept mistress *snitching* (that is, *informing*) on him, and upon being convicted, find him sentenced a second time to an imprisonment for the term of five years in the New-York State Prison. He served out the term of his sentence, and was dismissed from the prison.

From this time Swith had a variety of vicissitudes, of the particulars of which we are wholly unapprised. After being imprisoned in Philadelphia, Baltimore,

and New-York prisons, we find him once more at liberty to practice his villianny. He successfully lived by depredation and plunder, for nearly six months, in the city of New-York—a longer period than he had ever been at liberty during the last twenty-one years. One day however, he had lifted from a Dry Good Store, a piece of superfine broad cloth, and was making off unperceivedly with it. The Store Keeper missed it shortly after his departure, and immediately suspected him of the theft. He run out of his store, and sought the thief. He caught a glimpse of him as he turned the corner—he gave the alarm—the cloth was dropped—and but for a passenger in the street, Swith would have escaped. This theft is the cause of his present incarceration. He was tried, and convicted, and sentenced a *fourth* time to the New-York State Prison for the term of 14 years.

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### WILLIAM SCHROPSON

Was born in Amsterdam, in the year 1775. He was the natural child of a very wealthy man, who was much attached to his mother, and who supported her splendidly for about three years after William's birth; when he discovered her intrigue, with a young British Officer, and discarded her and his child for ever. It was a home blow to the prosperity of the mother; it was a death stroke to the virtue of the child. Her new paramour was somewhat poor, and was merely attracted for a moment by the lustre of her charms. She was deceived in the opinion which he entertained of her, for she thought that he rather looked upon her with a view to make her his wife, than to convert her into his

mistress. But the sequel proved the reverse. A cohabitation with him of six weeks, completely cloyed his appetites, and he left her, lone, penniless, and abandoned to the charities of the world. A few months of private keeping, the plaything of capricious lust, elapsed after his desertion, when with William her child, she took up her residence in a horrid brothel. It may easily be supposed, that at his age, less than five years old, when the young mind is gasping for, and grasping at every novelty, and moulding its faculties in imitation of the actions of those around it, that William did not during a residence of nearly three years in this sink of corruption, under the very eye of his mother, learn any thing that would redound to his future credit for virtue. Impressions made upon the mind in childhood, are not easily removed. It was here, perhaps, that the seeds of wickedness were planted in his heart, which have vegetated so prolifically through the various stages of his subsequent life. The brothel is a concentration of every thing wicked; and if it does not immediately corrupt its inmates, it prepares the mind for the embrace of vice, by making it familiar with its practised depravity. When eight years old, William contracted a vile disease, but how, or in what manner, is wholly unknown. It was not arrested in its progress, nor was its character discovered, until he (a mere child) became a horrible mass of disgusting corruption. His life was despaired of—and it was deemed expedient by his physicians, to devirilate the patient, in order to perform some operation, indispensable to his recovery. The operation was performed—every attendance was afforded him—and after a confinement to his room for nearly six months, he was restored to health. His mother shortly after, indented him to a Tailor,

in an extensive business, who kept him employed for a year or two, in the common drudgery of the shop. One day he was carrying home a suit of customer's clothes, when he was asked by a stranger the price of them ; and as if his mind was alive to the deepest movement of wickedness, he immediately named it. It was very small—it was much beneath their real value—and the money was paid him. And now, what should be done ? his conduct would certainly be known by his master—and its consequences to him might be shocking and disastrous. He went to his mother and gave her the one half of the money to keep for him, and posted off to another house of the same description, where he took lodgings. In a few hours, William was missed---the clothes had not been delivered---enquiry was made of the mother, who denied that she had seen him. His master sought him, without effect, for several days---and he abandoned the pursuit ; but yet the unconcern and composure of the mother, induced him to believe, that she knew something of her son. But, still she was mute and silent as death. Three weeks of incertitude transpired, when a friend of his master, (who had heard of his decamping) saw William wind his way into the brothel of his residence. He supposed him to have returned to his home, and never heeded it, until two or three evenings after, when seeing his master, he informed him of it, and to his surprise, learnt that William had not been seen. They immediately went to the house, and there they found him. The master questioned him---took him home--disbelieved his story---and handed him over to the ministers of the law. He was less than eleven years of age when he was tried, and there was a considerable sympathy excited for him, on account of his tender years, with the multitude. The Judge

lamented the necessity of inflicting an exemplary punishment, upon such a child---but justice required it. He was accordingly doomed to an imprisonment, at hard labour, for a series of years, the precise period being forgotten. During this time, he worked at various kinds of business---was friendly with the convicts---and found himself perfectly at home. His feelings very soon were in unison with theirs, and their depravity was soon familiar to him. It is never hard to corrupt a mind already ripe for villianny---that never knew the feeling of shame. He continued immured in his doleful prison, for about four years, when several desperate convicts formed the resolution of escaping. They made the attempt and succeeded; and William followed them through the aperture, which they had made. His first attempt was to find his mother---and she furnished him with a suit of clothes. He went on board of a vessel bound for America, which sailed soon after, and he shortly found himself at perfect liberty, in the city of Philadelphia. He there saw many of his countrymen, and he soon made acquaintances. He went to work for about a fortnight, at baking, and was discharged for incapacity. He then went to work at the shoemaking, but he was a perfect bungler, and was again discharged. He tried tayloring, but he spoiled a coat, and was degraded and discharged. He had now no money, he was somewhat in debt, and being disappointed in his endeavours at labour, he found no difficulty in resorting to villianny. He made his essay in guilt, in America, by the picking of a gentleman's pocket; to do which, with dexterity, he had practised under eminent masters, during almost the entire period of his four years imprisonment. He could take a pocket book from a coat pocket, whilst hanging upon a line, and liable to be shaken by every

breath of air, without moving the coat. No wonder then, that he should be somewhat successful in his trade. Four or five years, did he pursue his villianny, without a solitary detection, and generally without a suspicion of crime. He lived in the first style—enjoyed his bottle and his friend—and “wasted not his substance with harlots,” as men of that character most generally do. One day, however, when extracting a pocket book, from the pocket of a gentleman, on the entrance steps of the Bank of North America, he was discovered by a Lady, who gave information to the owner. He was detected, was tried and convicted, and was one of the very first convicts, sentenced to the Philadelphia Prison. He continued here imprisoned for about Two years, when he was liberated. He went to the city of New-York, where he commenced anew his villianny, and was very successful for nearly Three years. He uniformly visited all places of public amusement—kept a servant—and lived magnificently. The eye of suspicion, at length was fixed upon him. A very short time elapsed, when a pocket book was lost, at the Tontine Coffee House, by a merchant—he gave intimation of it—and Schropson who was moving off at some distance, was suspected as the thief. He was pursued, and was seen to throw it from him, as his pursuers neared him. He was taken into custody, and was committed for trial. A little while after he was tried, and being convicted, was sentenced to the New-York State Prison, for the term of Four years. He cannot be supposed to have had much compunction. He had no family connections to endear him to society, no flowery chain of love to fasten his affections. Selfishness absorbed every other feeling of his heart. He was a stranger to sexual sympathy; he was a perfect and determined mysogamist. The conduct

of his own mother, became often with him an object of the severest censure. He had an astonishing muscular strength, and, for an uneducated man, surprising powers of mind. But, yet he never suspired one wish, for a purity of heart—never gasped a breath of contrition for his crimes. He performed his sentence, and once more departed to practice his villianny. There is one thing very remarkable, with respect to this bad man : he would never be concerned with any person whomsoever, in the perpetration of crime. His trade was merely that of picking of pockets, and he performed his wickedness, without the aid of any other villian.—He went from New-York to Baltimore, where he resided for nearly a year, when he was again detected with a stolen pocket book, and being convicted, was doomed to the State Prison, for the term of Seven years. He was well known, and he was dealt with very severely. He of course saw many of his old State Prison friends, who in joint tenancy with himself, had there taken up their residence ; but who was that old emaciated, worn-out, fellow creature, with his cheek furrowed by care, and his lips quivering with the accents of sorrow ? whose locks—

“ Like some chenar-tree grove, when winter throws

“ O’er all its tufted heads, its feathering snows,

bespoke the departure irrecoverably of youth ? Who was he ? Some hoary veteran of crime, in the last moments of his penitence ? Some soul-tortured fellow creature, whose scorpion conscience was lashing him ? Some abject atom of humanity just passing into eternity ? Reader ! know that it was the father of Schropson. Reverses in his native land, drove him over to America—misfortunes here reduced him to beggary—and a conviction of forgery inducted him to the prison. A short conver-

sation, made his father know his child--he execrated himself for having deserted *him*, on account of the imprudence of his mother ; and he shortly after expired his last. Schropson performed his sentence, and was liberated. He departed for New-York. Cautious and circumspect, he lived and fared sumptuously for about two years, when he was convicted of his old crime, and sentenced a second time to the State Prison, for the term of Fourteen years.

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### JACOB COOLMAN

Was born in Connecticut. He removed with his wife and two children, into the state of New-York, some twelve or thirteen years ago, and settled on the borders of one of the Lakes. The first notice specially taken of his conduct, was, on being detected in attempting to sell a pair of stolen oxen. He could give no satisfaction, with respect to them---he was charged with the theft---was tried---convicted--and sentenced to the New-York State Prison, for the term of Ten years. He is one of those hypocritical *grinners*, often seen in life, with honey on their lips, and aloe in their hearts ; with the tears of the crocodile, and its proverbial insincerity ; and the whine of the catamount with its undoubted duplicity. To hear him, one would think him to be a perfect saint ; to look at him, would bring conviction of his being an earthly dæmon. He lost nothing by his intercourse with his abandoned and profligate associates---He was liberated after an imprisonment of about Three years and two months, greatly displeased with his wife and his friends, for their apparent neglect of him, during his confinement. He thought that they might have obtained his liberation, by interceding

with the executive for the purpose. But, he returned home---and was never well satisfied with the domestic occurrences of his family. One day he took his wife and one of his children in a boat, across the lake, to visit a friend. They spent a few hours there, and then started for their home. The clouds were dark, and portended a coming storm. It was somewhat squally; but they imagined, that they would be able to reach their home, before the storm set in. They were within a quarter of a mile of the shore, when the boat overset, and they were all mingled with the rising billows of the lake. Coolman could swim, and he proceeded towards the shore, amid the cries of his drowning wife and child, nor did he offer to assist them. "Father! Father!" cried a smart little boy, then seven years old, "help me or I drown." The billow closed around him---he sunk lifeless into its bosom. "Jacob! Jacob! will you leave me to drown," broke, in shrieking accents, from the lips of his perishing wife. He unheedingly proceeded on his way, and reached the shore. The upbraiding of his dying wife vibrated on his ear, and he apathetically answered, "You forgot me when in prison!" She sunk to rise no more.---The friends and acquaintance of Jacob, were not wholly satisfied with his conduct in this lamentable affair; and suspicion attributed the catastrophe to design. He was unpleasantly situated---and he retired into the bosom of an almost impervious thicket, where gathering every thing necessary for the purpose, he begun to make Counterfeit hard money---principally Spanish Dollars. He continued this trade for three years and upwards, and had several emissaries engaged in the *putting of them off*, when he was informed upon, and detected in the very act of coining them. He was tried and convicted, and sentenced to the State

Prison in New-York, a *second* time, during his natural life. He has been several years confined---but he has not forgotten his former wickedness. He is willing (and he has offered to do so to Twenty convicts who expected to be liberated) to give any person \$10,000, in Counterfeit hard money, at present buried, who will procure him a pardon.

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### JAMES WHITE

Was born in Ireland. His father was a very poor, but an industrious and honest man, by profession a weaver. He emigrated to America, leaving James, then seven years old, to the care of his aunt, residing in Londonderry.---The first thing that we know of him afterwards, he has fixed his residence in the outskirts of the city, where there is a great deal of low company. James sought a situation---he was on the point of getting one several times---but there was some fiend pursuing him, and branding him with dishonour, wherever he went. He usually informed his valued friend, the Sergeant of a regiment lying hard by, (who had lent him some necessary money) of his hopes, and he with an assiduity just worthy of a subtle crimp, immediately called upon his *expected* employer, and told him a tale disreputable to his character for honesty and truth---He could get no employment---the sergeant grew impatient for his money---he reproved his delay of payment---his poison worked well, and James finally *enlisted* !. A short few days saw him embark for the peninsula, with the regiment. He was not long continued in the ranks : he was assigned to the Commissary's of-

fice. He travelled Spain and Portugal with the British army ;

“ In camps licentious, wild and bold ;

“ In pillage fierce and uncontroul’d.”

The vices of the plundering and marauding soldiery, were familiar to him; for he was often degraded to the ranks, and replaced, and flogged, and otherwise punished, for his horrid participation in their brutal excesses. As it is always with crime in its progression and its growth, theft soon led him to the perpetration of murder. He and three others were in company in the suburbs of a Spanish village. They stopped at a little house, where an elderly man and his youthful daughter, from the convulsion of war, were undisturbedly retired. They saw every thing in unusual plenty around the house---they were well entertained---but they were not satisfied. They thought the venerable man had money, and they determined to have it. James seized him by the throat, and demanded it;—he assured them that he had but a doubloon and two half-joes, and they were welcome to them, although they were his *all*. They disbelieved him—he persisted in the asseveration, and James plunged his stiletto into the aged man’s heart, and left him weltering in his gore. He breathed his last a few minutes afterwards, and they plundered the house of every thing valuable. The daughter, when the aged father was seized, was hurried out of the room, and was left to the brutal lust of one of his rapacious and unfeeling comrades. *She was violated !*—The murdering villians departed, leaving the solitary daughter in the attitude of devotion beside the lifeless corpse of her aged father, mourning, at once, his brutal murder, and her own deforation. Her mother had been accidentally killed ;—her brother, her uncle, and her cousin, had

breathed their last at Saragossa, under the immortal Palafox;—her sister had been bayoneted by some French soldiers of the army of Massena;—her father had now been murdered by those professing themselves *friends*;—and she herself, the last link of the chain of consanguinity, had been robbed of her virtue.—O! what now must have been this poor female's feelings? Lonely and unprotected—without a relative near her—the thunders of war howling in the immediate horizon of her home—every footstep awakening her to every thing horrible—and not one near her upon whom she might confidently rely;—if any circumstances can aggravate the commission of a murder, surely, surely these were calculated to do so. But little heeded the murdering crew. James never reflected upon the enormity of the crime: *for murder was his trade*. A little time elapsed after the commission of this crime, when James found an opportunity to desert, and embarked for America. He arrived at New-York, where his father and family resided. He had two sisters and a younger brother. He had not seen them in sixteen years. They all cordially welcomed him, and every comfort was afforded him that the moderate circumstances of his father would allow. Three months after his arrival, his father furnished him with \$400 worth of goods, and designed him to open a shop in a country town, not far from New-York. James took the goods, but instead of pursuing the intended purpose, sacrificed them at auction, pocketed the money, and squandered it away, never going near his family until every cent was expended. His father and family reproved him in the severest terms---he was turbulent---they disagreed---and James left the house. He next taught a school on Long-Island, in the state of New-York, and was very steady for nearly three months: but he began to grow tired

of his preceptorship, and upon receiving his tuition fees, he took a final leave of his pupils and his school. He went to his father's, and all the unpleasantness occasioned by his villany with respect to the goods, was suspended if not forgotten. He conducted himself very properly for upwards of three months, and his father used his utmost endeavours to obtain a situation for him in some mercantile concern. He was on the point of effecting the desirable purpose, when a circumstance occurred that forever alienated James from the sympathy of his family. His elder sister was a blooming girl of about 17 years of age. It had been observed that James was much more intimate with her than with the rest of the family; but it was supposed to arise from a common and natural partiality. One day however, their step-mother (for their own mother died shortly after the arrival of the family in New-York) casually stole up stairs, and discovered James and his sister in a very delicate predicament. She informed their father, and the incestuous pair were instantly turned out of the house. James took lodgings for them both, and they lived together as man and wife. He resorted to expedients which he had acquired a knowledge of in the army, (that congregation of all that is abominable in wickedness, and horrible in depravity;) in order to defray their necessary expences. He was at length detected in a Forgery, and was sent to the State Prison in New-York. The sister partially conciliated the father, and by supplication and entreaty, prevailed upon him to intercede for his liberation. She went out to service, and so continued to support herself for about a year, when James was liberated. His father gave him \$20, and advised his departure for another state. He accordingly went to Pennsylvania, where he shortly after became acquainted with some desperate

and eminently profligate villains. If before his imprisonment, he had a trace of virtue, it was now entirely eradicated. He had no shame---no compunction. He had committed theft---murder---incest---forgery, and he could scarcely be supposed to have any scruple at committing any crime whatever. In company with four others, he went to the house of a wealthy and reputable man, living near Germantown, with the intention of robbing him; as it was reported that he had a large sum of money in his house. It was a winter's evening, and the aged man, his only child (his daughter) and a female domestic, were seated around a large fire of nut wood. The hail was patting against the windows, and the storm was encreasing, when a rap at the door disturbed the tranquility of the social circle. The door was opened by the daughter, when they all walked into the house, and without speaking a word, seated themselves around the fire. They were disguised and armed, and all of the family were terrified at their appearance and conduct. After warming themselves a little, and interchanging some unintelligible words (in the *flash* stile, perhaps, of *experienced* villains) two of them seized the domestic, and carried her into an adjoining room, one of them seized the daughter and threatened her life, with a huge knife, which he held in his hand, if she uttered a syllable, and the other two (James and another one) took hold of the old man. They demanded the money. He told them that he had but a few dollars, which he gave them. They tied him, beat and tortured him, to make him confess where his money was secreted. The females were not treated with less brutality. James searched the house---but no money was to be found. All of them were irritated---no confession could be extorted---and they threatened immediate and indiscriminate death to

the family. It was of no avail. James thrust the tongs into the fire, heated them red hot, and hung them upon the neck of the aged man, observing as he viewed his writhen visage, "see how the old miser *grins*." This barbarity was repeated several times, until the neck of the tortured man was so much burnt, that it occasioned his death in a very few hours. They departed, disappointed of their plunder. The brutality and the murder were known, and the villains were advertised. Three of them were arrested---the daughter testified against them---and they were convicted. But a something in the world of quibbles saved them from merited execution, and merely doomed them to imprisonment. James escaped and joined his sister in New-York, and under an assumed name went up the North River. He stopped at Catskill for about two weeks, and formed the resolution of rifling a store standing near the water, of its goods, and departing for New-York. He procured a boat with a large latteen sail, after nightfall, and fastened her near the store. He forced one of the windows, and entered it. He took from it a large quantity of goods, worth \$1600 dollars, put them in the boat, and proceeded down the river. In the morning, the theft was discovered at the store, and as luck would have it for James, the boat was missed almost at the same moment, by some persons who had designed an excursion down the river that very morning. The presumption was immediately raised, that the goods had been taken away in the boat, and persons were despatched on horseback, both up and down the river, in quest of the stolen articles. James was discovered with his plunder; was taken back to Catskill; was tried and convicted, and a *second* time, sentenced to the New-York State Prison for the term of 5 years.

## ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INSPECTORS OF THE NEW-YORK STATE PRISON.

*To the Honourable the Legislature of the state of New-York.*

The Inspectors of the State Prison in New-York, respectfully report:—Being aware of the importance of the trust committed to their charge, and the obligation they are under to society, to promote as far as possible the end for which the institution was established: that of convincing the criminal “that the way of the transgressor is hard,” and thereby, if possible, to produce reformation. Convinced that a mere compliance with the law would never effect the object, they have made it their daily business, and they have the gratification to state, that they feel themselves amply compensated, by seeing the work, under the blessing of Heaven, prospering under their hands.

The orderly conduct of the prisoners, the faithful performance of their daily tasks, (with but few exceptions) their manifest contrition for past offences, and their humble submission under the severest discipline, portends the most salutary result, and is a confirmation of the efficacy of the present system, to restrain and reform the culprit as far as the power and the ingenuity of the creature can accomplish.

It will be seen, that the anticipations of the Inspectors, as expressed in their last report, have been fully realized.

The number of convicts in confinement, during the last year, was as follows:—

Remaining in prison, per last report, 553; admitted during the year 175; pardoned, 98; Died, 35; discharged, by expiration of sentence, 16; remaining, 580.

The number admitted being 27 less than the preceding year, and to account for the increase of number, it will be remembered that in 1821, there were pardoned 197, and during the last year but 98. Had the pardons been equal to the preceding year, the number remaining would have been 486. The increase of deaths, and discharges by expiration of sentence, will account for the trifling difference.

The Inspectors adopted the plan of recommending a few monthly, as deserving of executive clemency; and it having met the approbation of his Excellency Gov. Clinton, the effect it had produced in the minds of the convicts, warrants its continuance.

At the expiration of the year they were thus employed :—

*Men.*—Weavers, 98; quillers and spoolers, 53; spinners, twisters and carders, 19; gear makers, 4; dying and sizing yarn, 5; stocking weavers, 3; picker maker, 1; reed do., 1; superintending weaving factory, 2; clerk of do. 1; sweeping and carrying water, 2; shoemakers, 83; closers and binders, 3; cutting out shoes, &c. 2; clerks in factory, 1; turners, 6; brushmakers, 17; blacksmiths, 14; carpenters, 25; coopers, 6; tailors, 5; painters, 2 oakum pickers, &c. 15; trunk makers, 3; comb do. 44; locksmiths and moulders, 23; filers, 12; barbers and gate keepers, 4; clerk of the yard, 1; N. Yd. man, ostler and gardener, 3; cooks and bakers, 8; waiters in hall 3, 5; do. 5, 2; do. front, 2; do. middle hall, 1; clerks in back office, 2; apothecary, 1; superintendant in hospital, 1; cooks, waiters, nurses, &c. 5; sick 44; locked in rooms, (one a lunatic,) 2; in solitary confinement, 4; in cells, 5.—Total, 541.

*Women.*—Washing, 15; sewing, 10; spoolers, 4; attendant in hall, 1; do. in front, 2; sick, 4; nurse, 1; invalid, 1; in cells, 1.—Total, 39.

The number of convicts employed at a daily stipend, is rapidly increasing. It is found to be the most productive way of employing them, and the revenue is certain.

The contract for supplying the convicts with daily rations, is 6 1-4 cents per day; the preceding year it was 6 cents. That additional expense, together with a considerable sum paid for repairs, has been met by the increase of labour.

The deficiency of last year is stated at \$351.41; but there is one important fact which the Inspectors omitted to notice in their last report. When they entered upon the duties of their office, there was a accommodation paper to the amount of \$17,787.83, a debt previously contracted. The grant of \$10,000 for the last year, and there being \$3,000 due the institution on a former application, it was deemed advisable to draw those two sums, to be applied in liquidating that debt; accordingly \$12,737.83 has been paid, and the balance \$262.17 has been absorbed in interest, with nearly \$600 of the last year's earnings. It, therefore, appears, that the profits of the institution the last year, has covered all the expenses, with the exception of Salary Officers; and when taken into consideration the expense of fuel, stationery, \$1,750 for the supply of the Hospital, \$250 for Clergymen; and the amount bestowed on prisoners when discharged, together with the contingent expenses of the institution, the loss of labour of those sick in the Hospital, and many

from debility being incapable of performing a full task, which greatly reduces the number of effective labourers; as all those expenses are to be met, independent of the support and clothing of all the convicts, it must be admitted, that the concerns of the institution *are fast approximating to that state of perfection*, which will crown the wishes of its advocates, and dispel the doubts of its-opposers.

While the institution is rapidly improving in its financial concerns, the moral and religious instruction of the convicts is not neglected.—That eminent philanthropist, the Rev. John Stanford, continues to manifest his faith by his works. His enlightened views of the character of God towards his creature man make him useful, and his labours have been greatly blessed. Schools are organized under his direction, and after the convict has performed his daily task, he is then permitted to study, and the rapid advances they are making, warrant the conclusion that much good will be the result.

The Inspectors are aware that many objections are raised against the present system of punishment; and it is notorious that those who are the loudest in condemning have never visited the prison, and know nothing of its operations. They, therefore, feel it a duty, which they owe to the representatives of the people, and the public at large, to notice three of the most prominent.

First—That it establishes a monopoly, to the injury of the virtuous and industrious. To this they reply, that in former years, when the raw material was furnished by the state, and warehouses were established to vend the manufactured articles, and which were frequently sold, at a reduced price to insure a demand, it might justly be deemed a grievance; as the industrious mechanic was compelled by tax, to support an institution which was at variance with his own interest. Not so now: by the present arrangement, the employer furnishes the raw materials and tools, and the only advantage he derives, is from the low price of labour. It must, therefore, be obvious to every reflecting mind, that the wages must be governed by the demand for their services, and to that end, the Inspectors have, and do still invite a competition; and as those employed by the day are engaged at combs, locks, brushes, trunks, ploughs, brass foundering, filing, coopering, machinery, joiner's work, &c. it must be evident, *from the diversity of employment, no great evil can result.* The Contractors for the weavers and shoemakers, furnish also the raw material; for the ser-

vices of the former they pay by the yard, and the latter by the piece. Those employed for the use of the prison, are furnished with raw material by the Agent, which bills are regularly audited by the Inspectors.

The second objection, that it gives trades to rogues and swindlers, to the injury of the regular bred mechanic, who has acquired his knowledge by a seven years' apprenticeship. Let it be remembered, that a large portion of the inmates of a prison, constitute three classes of persons: *tillers of ground*, watermen, and fatherless children. The two former are destitute of trades from necessity: the latter claim the public sympathy. Often have we heard the widowed mother, lament her neglect of duty towards her offspring, and condemn her parental folly. Can any evil result to society, in placing those unfortunate fellow beings in a situation, that when liberated, they can procure a subsistence by their own industry, and thereby prevent their becoming paupers on the public? And ought not the few individuals who, in imagination, believe they sustain a loss, submit to the public good?

The third and last objection we notice is, that the prison has no terrors; the convicts are too well fed and clad; and that cleanliness is visible to a fault. As the report of the Inspectors, will meet the eye of persons, whose distance from the abode of misery, prevents their becoming acquainted with its discipline, they trust, it will not be deemed an act of trespass, by stating the treatment a prisoner receives from the commencement. When received at the prison, his hair is cropped; he is stripped and attired in a coarse striped dress, (manufactured in the prison). If a second comer, the right side of his jacket, and left side of his trousers, are black. If a third comer, he has in addition, a large figure 3 on his back; he is immediately put to labour; his food is of the *coarsest* kind, which costs 6 1-4 cents per day; he is compelled to labour from the rising to the setting sun, with but short intermissions to eat his meals; he is not permitted to converse with a friend, but in presence of a Keeper; at night he lies down on a bed of straw; from the time he is taken to his room until eight o'clock, he is allowed to read or converse with his room mates; and at the beat of the drum, the lights are extinguished, and a solemn silence reigns throughout the prison. In the morning you behold him, emerging from his room, with a countenance on which is seated the gloom of despondency; and having to perform his daily task, under the severest restraint, he

must feel that his state is the most abject submission. But to trace him through all the scenes of misery ; his privations producing debility and disease ; see him stretched on a bed of languishing ; and notwithstanding the greatest attention to his wants, his confinement produces diseases, that baffle the skill of the physicians, and terminate in death. Let it be remembered, the reports of the deaths in the city of all above the age of eighteen, are as 1 to 900 ; in the prison, as 1 to 250. And when understood, that many of these pardoned are, by long confinement, emaciated and broke down by disease, and expire in a short time after their liberation, it may justly be stated, that the severities of the prison occasion the death of two per month, which, if publicly executed, a general sympathy and disgust would pervade all classes of society. It therefore follows, to increase the severity of punishment, you will swell the list of its victims.

The classification of the prisoners has been adopted, as far as the construction of the prison will admit. All under the age of fifteen lodge together. The second and third comers are also separated. On the 24th of April, 1822, the Inspectors placed *boards* in different parts of the yard, on which are sentences of admonition ; such as reminding the prisoner of the evil consequences of transgression, and the folly of being self-tormentors ; which was operated powerfully on the minds of many. On one, they are reminded of the object of the institution, that of convincing the criminal, that "the way of the transgressor is hard ;" and warning them, that if liberated, and again returning, it will manifest their depravity ; and both justice and mercy require, that their labour and privations should be increased.

*The Inspectors have the gratification to state, that 68 have been liberated since that date, and not one has returned.* But, to provide for the occurrence, and it being just that the punishment should be increased, the Inspectors recommend solitary confinement at night ; they being compelled to work in the yard during the day, the privation will be more sensibly felt ; and their returning nightly to their dreary cell, in view of the other prisoners, will create a sympathy, and may be attended with the most salutary results. If the honourable Legislature should approve of the punishment, the Inspectors would ask for \$3,000, which will erect a sufficient number of cells, for the present purposes. As the work may principally be performed by convicts, which may be accomplished for that sum.

The Inspectors are aware that many of their fellow citi-

zens are decidedly in favour of total seclusion, as the most effectual method to prevent crime; and as from experience and observation, they are compelled to dissent from such opinion, they feel it to be their duty to express the reasons on which they found their objections. It will be admitted that the design of laws should be the benefit of the governed; when they fail of effecting this, they are enemies and not friends. And the design of all punishment should be, the benefit and reformation of the punished; any other motive would be malicious and revengeful. It therefore follows that disciplinary punishment is the only correction in ordinary cases compatible with the genius of a free people. To enlighten the understanding, (which, had it not been darkened, would not have produced criminality,) and convince the guilty that vice and suffering, and virtue and happiness, are inseparably connected as cause and consequence. When the understanding is enlightened, to see the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice, and is convinced that the punishment is inflicted by a friend, who has humanity, instead of a foe, breathing nothing but threatening and slaughter, a reformation will inevitably follow. On the other hand, man is so constituted, that, convince him of your indifference to his welfare, and determination to seek revenge, and you inspire a corresponding sentiment; and he will, like the untutored savage, glut his vengeance at the expense of every honourable principle, and in defiance of every noble, humane, and generous sentiment. In fine, the administrator of the laws is a schoolmaster, and his usefulness depends altogether on the improvement of his pupils. It is under a conviction of these truths, that they cannot refrain from expressing their fears, that solitary confinement, without labour, will be attended with serious consequences.

The Inspectors have, for offences committed within the prison, sentenced the offender to solitary confinement; he is then chained to the floor, and his diet is bread and water; he is compelled to remain until circumstances justify his removal; and, as it always accompanied with a suitable admonition, the punishment is deemed salutary and rational. They are convinced, from observation, that the effect is vastly different, between confining in a cell for a limited time, of which the prisoner is made acquainted, and from which he is not permitted to hope for the least diminution, or confining him, subject to the visits of an individual who shall possess the power to mitigate, and on whom the prison-

may look as his deliverer, when his language shall manifest contrition. The former irritates and hardens; the latter humbles and softens. But it not being the wish of the Inspectors to influence, nor their prerogative to condemn, they will state, for the information of the Legislature, that *John Smith* was sentenced May 20th, 1822, from the county of Westchester, to six months solitary confinement; he was visited a few days previous to his liberation, and instead of an humble contrite penitent, we found a revengeful, hardened, desperado. *John Wightman* was also liberated after three months confinement, and no signs of reformation were manifested. These men were placed in cells which were built expressly for solitary punishment, and from which they could have no view of the surrounding objects. But it may be said, their situation was still too comfortable; they ought to have been confined in a damp and dreary dungeon, and excluded from the light of day; buried within an imaginary grave, and doomed to experience the horrors of dissolving nature. We answer, if a man can be found, to inflict such discipline, he may be an instrument in the hands of power, to *kill*, but not to reform. Experience teaches that there is a principle in the human breast, that will never yield to the iron hand of oppression. And beside, man being a creature of habit, if confined for three or five years in a state of inactivity, he becomes a sullen morbid creature; and when discharged from his cell, and thrown upon the world, you behold him destitute of food and clothing; without a friend to alleviate his sufferings; a stranger to society; his frame emaciated; his mind disordered; and the greatest of all calamities has befallen him, he is self degraded, not a beam of light crosses his mind; but all is doubt and despair. Hunger pierces him; he asks a pittance, and is refused. We leave it to the advocates of the system, to name the remedy.

It must be admitted that the discipline of our prisons is susceptible of great improvements, but if virtue is its own reward, there is room for its exercise; and if vice is its own punisher, there is enough of suffering seen in the misery of its recipients, to deter from the example. The inspectors do therefore solicit, that solitary confinement may not be extended to the prison under their charge, until the effect shall be known, and its efficacy in reforming the culprit, sufficiently tested.

As it may be deemed expedient at the present session, to

revise the law relating to State Prisons, the attention of the Legislature is requested to the last clause of the twentieth section, in the code recommended by the Inspectors, in their last report, making it the duty of all persons employing the convicts, to take an oath or affirmation, to conform in all things to the rules and regulations of the institution: and that part of the twenty-seventh, as it relates to the Inspectors. If they could be enacted at the present session, much good would be the result. The former would tend to prevent impositions; and the latter, as duty requires that the Inspectors should meet frequently in the prison, it will prevent their being a burden upon the keeper.

From the prosperous state of the institution, the Inspectors see no necessity for an appropriation to meet the expenses of the coming year; but they do recommend that \$5000 be granted, to discharge the balance due on the note as before stated, and \$3000 for the erection of cells, to separate second comers at night.

By discharging the former, the state will be relieved from paying the interest, and by building the latter, the discipline of the prison will be greatly improved.

The Inspectors cannot close this report, without again expressing their conviction that *Workhouses*, established in each county of the state, would greatly tend to lessen crime and prevent imposition, as they would be asylums, to which all classes might resort. They would effectually draw the line between the hardened culprit and the suffering offender, and the discipline of our prison might then accord with the disparity of crimes; and, as the plea of necessity would be banished from their walls, justice might then be satisfied, and the culprit receive a full, ample and salutary correction.

STUART F. RANDOLPH,  
JOHN DRAKE,  
SAMUEL M. THOMPSON,  
WILLIAM WHITLOCK.  
CORNELIUS HARSEN,  
P. BONNETT,  
THOMAS MILLER.

*New-York, Jan. 1, 1823.*







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